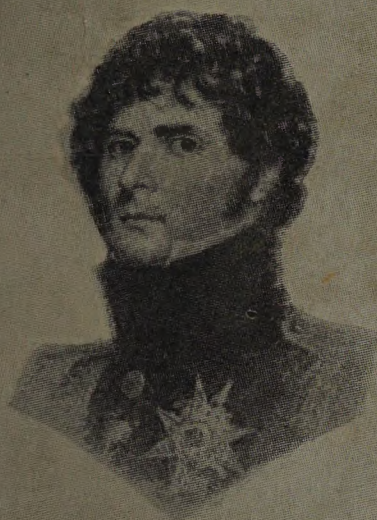


King of Sweden and Norway



Crown Prince of Sweden



Revolutionary General

*The
Amazing
Career of*

BERNADOTTE

by

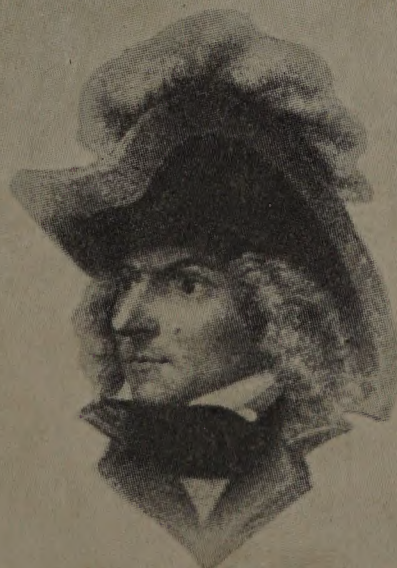
Sir **DUNBAR PLUNKET
BARTON**



Soldier of King Louis



Napoleon's Marshal



Ambassador under the Directory

THE STORMY LIFE OF MIRABEAU

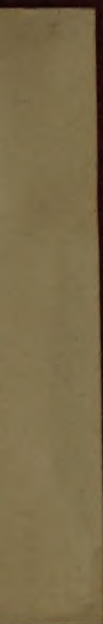
By Henry de Jouvenel

GOETHE called him 'the Hercules of the French Revolution.' Carlyle said of him, 'He shook old France from its basis, and held it toppling there.'

When eighteen, Mirabeau wished to marry a pretty country girl, but his stern father shipped him off to prison. When freed, he went to court, married a great heiress, ran through her fortune, and was again imprisoned, lying for over three years in a cell in Vincennes. When liberated, he wrote pamphlets to incite the people to revolt. The aristocracy and the monarchy feared and hated him. He was elected a delegate of the new States General. With his eloquence, he swayed the Assembly. When the fury of the Revolution broke loose, he tried to save the Royal family. Monarchy and people both relied on him now. He rode the Revolution. But his health was weakening; at the zenith of his power he died. Weeping crowds gathered in the streets, and Marie Antoinette sobbed as she heard the news.

His life of passion and glory has been splendidly told in this absorbing book.

Lavishly illustrated





THE AMAZING CAREER OF BERNADOTTE

1763—1844

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
CHICAGO, ILL.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED



CHARLES XIV, KING OF SWEDEN AND NORWAY (JEAN BAPTISTE BERNADOTTE).

After the portrait by L. David.

[Frontispiece.]

THE AMAZING CAREER OF BERNADOTTE

1763—1844

BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
SIR DUNBAR PLUNKET BARTON
BARONET, K.C., P.C.

FORMERLY SOLICITOR-GENERAL AND JUDGE OF THE HIGH COURT
IN IRELAND; AUTHOR OF "BERNADOTTE, THE FIRST PHASE,
1763-1799"; "BERNADOTTE AND NAPOLEON, 1800-1810";
"BERNADOTTE, PRINCE AND KING, 1810-1844"; "LINKS BETWEEN
IRELAND AND SHAKESPEARE"; "LINKS BETWEEN SHAKESPEARE
AND THE LAW"; "THE STORY OF THE INNS OF COURT," ETC.

WITH PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

FIRST EDITION . . . 1929

*Printed in Great Britain by
Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ltd., London and Aylesbury.*

CONTENTS

	PAGE
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	ix
INTRODUCTION	xi

PART I

THE OLD REGIME AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

1763-1794

CHAPTER

I. RACIALITY — BIRTHPLACE — BOYHOOD — ENLISTMENT. (1763-1784).	3
II. THE FRENCH REVOLUTION—FROM PRIVATE TO SERGEANT-MAJOR. (1784-1792)	9
III. THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMY—FROM LIEUTENANT TO GENERAL. (1792- 1794)	16

PART II

THE FRENCH DIRECTORY

1795-1799

IV. THE ARMY OF SAMBRE AND MEUSE— THE WATCH ON THE RHINE. (1795- 1796)	27
V. FIRST MEETING WITH NAPOLEON BONA- PARTE—THE ARMY OF ITALY. (1797).	41
VI. BERNADOTTE'S FIRST PLUNGE INTO POLITICS—THE COUP D'ÉTAT OF FRUCTIDOR. (1797)	52
VII. THE FIRST RIFT WITH NAPOLEON. (1797)	62

CHAPTER	PAGE
VIII. A GASCON AMBASSADOR. (1798) . . .	74
IX. MARRIAGE. (1798)	84
X. A PHANTOM ARMY AND SOME REJECTED OPPORTUNITIES. (1798)	90
XI. MINISTER OF WAR. (1799)	97
XII. THE RETURN OF NAPOLEON FROM EGYPT— THE COUP D'ÉTAT OF BRUMAIRE. (1799)	108

PART III

THE CONSULATE

1800–1804

XIII. A PERIOD OF CHAGRIN AND DISAPPOINT- MENT. (1800–1801)	121
XIV. BERNADOTTE'S PRIVATE LIFE. (1800–1801)	131
XV. PLOTS AND CONSPIRACIES—CÆSAR AND MARC ANTONY. (1800–1803)	140
XVI. LOUISIANA AND WASHINGTON. (1803) .	149
XVII. AN EMPEROR'S OLIVE BRANCH—BERNA- DOTTE BECOMES A MARSHAL OF FRANCE AND GOVERNOR OF HANOVER (1804- 1805)	154

PART IV

THE EMPIRE OF NAPOLEON I

1804–1810

XVIII. HANOVER. (1804–1805)	163
XIX. AUSTERLITZ. (1805)	171
XX. BERNADOTTE BECOMES PRINCE OF PONTE CORVO. (1806)	180
XXI. JENA. (1806)	185
XXII. "THE GREAT PURSUIT"—THE STORMING OF HALLE AND LÜBECK. (1806).	192

CONTENTS

vii

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXIII. POLAND. (1806-1807)	201
XXIV. DENMARK AND HAMBURG. (1807-1809) .	207
XXV. WAGRAM. (1809)	215
XXVI. WALCHEREN AND ROME. (1809-1810) .	224

PART V

CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN

1810-1818

XXVII. BERNADOTTE'S ELECTION AS CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN. (1810) . . .	233
XXVIII. BERNADOTTE CEASES TO BE A FRENCHMAN AND BECOMES A SWEDE. (1810) . .	245
XXIX. THE DÉBUT OF THE CROWN PRINCE. (1810)	250
XXX. THE CROWN PRINCE'S FOREIGN POLICY— FINLAND OR NORWAY? (1810-1811)	257
XXXI. NAPOLEON ATTACKS SWEDEN AND FORCES HER TO BECOME THE ALLY OF RUSSIA AND ENGLAND. (1812)	265
XXXII. A WINTER IN STOCKHOLM AND A TREATY WITH ENGLAND. (1812-1813) . . .	273
XXXIII. THE WAR OF LIBERATION—THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN. (1813)	278
XXXIV. THE WAR OF LIBERATION—THE DEFENCE OF BERLIN. (1813)	285
XXXV. THE WAR OF LIBERATION—THE BATTLE OF LEIPSIC. (1813)	295
XXXVI. THE FALL OF NAPOLEON—BERNADOTTE'S LAST VISIT TO PARIS. (1813-1814) .	304
XXXVII. THE UNION WITH NORWAY—THE CON- GRESS OF VIENNA—THE HUNDRED DAYS. (1814-1817)	313

PART VI

KING OF SWEDEN AND NORWAY

1818-1844

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXXVIII. ACCESSION AND CORONATION. (1818) .	325
XXXIX. THE KING AND QUEEN AT HOME. (1818-1844)	330
XL. THE PRISONER OF ST. HELENA. (1815-1821)	337
XLI. THE KING'S RELATIONS WITH FRANCE. (1818-1844)	344
XLII. THE KING'S RELATIONS WITH ENGLAND. (1818-1844)	350
XLIII. HOW BERNADOTTE ESTABLISHED HIS DYNASTY IN SWEDEN. (1818-1844) .	357
XLIV. HOW BERNADOTTE ESTABLISHED HIS DYNASTY IN NORWAY. (1818-1844) .	366
XLV. THE LAST PHASE. (1838-1844) . . .	372
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE	377
INDEX	382

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CHARLES XIV, KING OF SWEDEN AND NORWAY (JEAN BAPTISTE BERNADOTTE) . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
THE HOUSE IN PAU WHERE BERNADOTTE WAS BORN . . .	3
BERNADOTTE, SOLDIER OF KING LOUIS XVI . . .	14
GENERAL KLÉBER	20
ST. JUST (THE FIDUS ACHATES OF ROBESPIERRE) . . .	28
BERNADOTTE AT THE BATTLE OF TEINING . . .	32
TWO PORTRAITS OF GENERAL MARCEAU . . .	34
THE CROSSING OF THE TAGLIAMENTO . . .	46
THE STORMING OF GRADISCA BY BERNADOTTE . . .	48
GENERAL MASSÉNA AND GENERAL AUGEREAU . . .	56
FOUR PORTRAITS OF GENERAL BERNADOTTE . . .	68
GENERAL BERNADOTTE, SOLDIER-AMBASSADOR . . .	76
DÉSIRÉE CLARY	88
BARRAS AND SIEYÈS	104
BONAPARTE AND BERNADOTTE	114
JOSEPH BONAPARTE AND HIS WIFE (JULIE CLARY). . .	130
MADAME RÉCAMIER, MADAME DE GENLIS, MADAME DE STAËL	154
PAULINE, ELIZA, LUCIEN, AND CAROLINE BONAPARTE . .	160
MARSHAL BERNADOTTE, PRINCE OF PONTE CORVO . . .	182
MARSHAL DAVOUT AND MARSHAL BERTHIER . . .	190
MARSHAL BERNADOTTE, PRINCE OF PONTÈ CORVO AND GOVERNOR OF THE HANSEATIC TOWNS . . .	212

	FACING PAGE
JOSEPH FOUCHÉ, DUKE OF OTRANTO	226
PRINCE OSCAR BERNADOTTE—THE CASTLE OF ÖREBRO .	240
BERNADOTTE AND DÉsirÉE, CROWN PRINCE AND PRIN- CESS OF SWEDEN	244
THE LANDING OF BERNADOTTE AT HELSINGBORG .	250
RING SENT BY NAPOLEON TO BERNADOTTE IN 1811 .	268
CASTLE OF ABO, WHERE THE CZAR MET BERNADOTTE IN 1812	268
ALEXANDER I, CZAR OF RUSSIA	278
GENERAL SIR CHARLES STEWART, AFTERWARDS 3RD MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY	286
PRINCE BLÜCHER	296
ENTRY OF THE ALLIED SOVEREIGNS INTO LEIPSIC, 19TH OCTOBER, 1813	302
THE ALLIED BAKERS OR THE CORSICAN TOAD-IN-THE- HOLE. G. G. CRUIKSHANK	304
THE CORSICAN WHIPPING-TOP IN FULL SPIN!!! G. G. CRUIKSHANK	308
KING CHARLES XIII, BERNADOTTE'S ADOPTIVE FATHER.	314
JEAN BAPTISTE BERNADOTTE, CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN	322
DÉsirÉE CLARY, QUEEN OF SWEDEN AND NORWAY .	330
KING CHARLES XIV (JEAN BAPTISTE BERNADOTTE) .	358
SEVEN MILESTONES IN THE CAREER OF JEAN BAPTISTE BERNADOTTE	376

MAPS

	PAGE
THE THEATRE OF WAR IN GERMANY (1792-1799) .	30
MARSHAL BERNADOTTE'S MOVEMENTS IN THE CAMPAIGN OF 1805	172
THE PURSUIT OF THE PRUSSIANS BY MARSHALS MURAT, BERNADOTTE AND SOULT, 15TH OCTOBER—5TH NOVEMBER, 1806	194

INTRODUCTION

THE career of Jean Baptiste Bernadotte presents several features of almost unique interest. He began by enlisting as a private soldier, ended as a King, and founded a dynasty which has endured. As a result of his election to a foreign throne, he played a conspicuous part under two flags, the French and the Swedish, became involved in a conflict of loyalties, and was forced to fight for the country of his adoption against the country of his birth. He was the only general who withstood Napoleon's usurpation of power; and his relations with the Emperor were strange and complex.

Bernadotte's character has been described as "an undecipherable enigma." The explanation of the enigma is that he was a type of a peculiar race. Upon this subject there is a remarkable concurrence of well-informed opinion. Napoleon said of him that he was *un vrai Gascon*. He was described by the French historian, Albert Sorel, as a "pure Gascon of Gascony"; by the French Academician, Count E. M. de Vogüé, as "so complete an example of his race that he reproduces in his single personality twenty characteristic figures, Montluc and Cyrano, Henri IV and d'Artagnan"; and by a critical student of his career, M. Léonce Pingaud, as "the most daring, the most extraordinary and the most fortunate of the cadets of Gascony."

Bernadotte has been the object of extravagant praise and of equally extravagant depreciation. The author, who has treated the subject in greater detail in three former volumes, has approached it without bias, has examined all the authorities that were within his reach, and has endeavoured to present a true portrait.

PART I

*THE OLD REGIME AND THE FRENCH
REVOLUTION*¹

1763-1794

¹ This period has been treated in greater detail in *Bernadotte, the First Phase* (John Murray, London), chapters i-xix, pp. 1-111.



THE HOUSE IN PAU WHERE BERNADOTTE WAS BORN,
JANUARY 1763.

CHAPTER I

RACIALITY—BIRTHPLACE—BOYHOOD—ENLISTMENT

1763-1784

It was Carnival time at Pau, the ancient capital of Béarn, in the country of the Gascons. While the festivities of the season were in full swing, a band of revellers made a surprise visit to the house of M. Henri Bernadotte, whose wife was resting at home because she was expecting soon to become a mother. The sudden entry of a noisy party of fantastically dressed and masked figures caused a premature confinement, and in this not unfitting manner did Jean Baptiste Bernadotte begin his extravagantly adventurous career.¹

The infant Bernadotte was put to nurse with a woman of Pau, who suckled and reared him with two other children, a boy and a girl. To the end of her life he kept in touch with his foster-mother ; and when he became a King, he handsomely provided for the peasant woman who had been his foster-sister, and he took his foster-brother with him to his kingdom, where he employed and ennobled him.²

A French historian and Academician³ has noticed, as a significant circumstance, that the place where Bernadotte's foster-mother nursed him was close to the birth-place of d'Artagnan, that type of the Gascon race whom Alexandre Dumas immortalised by making him the hero of *The Three Musketeers*. It has been suggested that Dumas modelled his d'Artagnan on Bernadotte.

¹ January 26th, 1763.

² See pp. 262 and 348, *post*.

³ Albert Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution Française*, vii. 218, 455.

Bernadotte and d'Artagnan¹ had at least one similarity. Both were Gascons of Béarn. The Béarnais, as the men of Béarn were called, were Gascons of a virile type. They were as showy and attractive as the cadets of Cyrano de Bergerac. Yet upon their Gascon stock were grafted the non-Gascon qualities of prudence and caution. Their peculiar traits were traceable to their mixed ancestry, which comprised French, Spanish and Moor. Béarn lay at the foot of the Pyrenees; and the inhabitants were pithed into hardihood by the border forays and invasions, in which they had been involved through the centuries. Three names stand for types of the Béarnais race—Henri IV, d'Artagnan and Jean Baptiste Bernadotte.

M. Henri Bernadotte, who was a lawyer of distinction holding the office of King's Attorney,² is said by one of Jean Baptiste's comrades-in-arms to have "taken care to inspire the boy with noble sentiments."³ Madame Bernadotte, *née* Jeanne de St. Jean, was connected with a noble family of the neighbourhood, and had Huguenot kinsfolk. She is described as having been "remarkable for elevation of mind and energy of character." The family was of old standing at Pau, tracing its name to a property possessed by an ancestor in the sixteenth century. The family tradition was legal and forensic. They were Catholics, and belonged to the class which was known as "La bourgeoisie honorable de la Robe."

Jean Baptiste was the youngest of a family which comprised an elder brother, Jean, with whom he kept up a lively correspondence, and an elder sister Marie. His boyhood was spent at Pau under the shadow of the historic castle of Henri IV, which was perched upon a hill above the town. Henri IV was the boy's hero, and the career of Henri IV was his inspiration. The people of Béarn, and particularly the inhabitants of Pau, cherished a passionate admiration for Henri IV, who had

¹ *The Three Musketeers* was published in 1844, the year of Bernadotte's death.

² *Procureur du Roi*.

³ Sarrazin, *Phil.*, ii. 2.

been handed down as *le bon roi* and as the only Bourbon King of whom the French people had treasured the memory.

The boy went to a school of the Benedictines, who were noted for character-building. We know nothing of his early studies ; but there were two scars on his forehead which remained as life-long memorials of school-boy combats. He found his favourite recreation at the post-house, where he obtained leave to ride the post-horses. The postmaster in later years delighted in relating how this amateur postilion used to act his part so well as to earn and pocket the customary *pourboire*.

Bernadotte was intended for the Bar, at which profession his elder brother practised with success. But his legal career was cut short by the death of his father in the second year of his apprenticeship. Being faced by the prospect of a long period of dependency upon his mother and brother, he ran away from home one evening in September 1780 and enlisted in the Royal-la-Marine Regiment, which was so called because it was raised and recruited for service in islands, seaports and across the seas.

In order to avoid discovery, he had the necessary papers *viséd* by the mayor of a neighbouring municipality. Attached to his enlistment there was a tradition that a veteran of the regiment, with whom he exchanged clothes, told him in jest that he was sending him forth to become a Marshal of France. If he really said so he was mocking the recruit, because the narrow regulations, which were then in force, prevented a soldier of bourgeois extraction from rising to any of the higher ranks of the army.

These were the inauspicious circumstances under which Jean Baptiste Bernadotte started on his military career, a runaway from home, without friends or money or backing. According to his official description he had "dark hair and eyebrows, brown deep-set eyes and a long, pointed nose." These items bear a curious analogy to

the particulars which Alexandre Dumas gives in *The Three Musketeers* of d'Artagnan, whom he portrays as a young Gascon "with eye open and intelligent, the nose hooked but finely chiselled."

Soon after his enlistment Bernadotte was sent to Corsica, where he was stationed for a year and a half in the same island and sometimes in the same town as the Bonaparte family, with whom his career was to be so strangely linked. The Corsicans were unaware that they had amongst them a group of future Kings and Princes. As he trod the streets of Ajaccio he must have passed some of the Bonapartes. Bernadotte could not have seen Joseph or Napoleon, because they were at school, nor Caroline and Jerome, because they were not yet born. But the rest of the Bonapartes, Lucien, Eliza, Louis, and Pauline, were children living in their mother's home at Ajaccio, within a stone's-throw of the military barracks.

The Governor of Corsica was M. de Marbeuf, known to history as the friend and patron of the Bonapartes. The recruit's only meeting with the Governor was one which called for the exercise of resourcefulness. Bernadotte received an invitation to a repast in the vice-regal kitchen from the Governor's *chef*, who was a native of Pau. While the two Béarnais were regaling themselves, M. de Marbeuf was heard approaching. The cook's young guest promptly assumed a white cap and was introduced as a kitchen assistant. In this way an awkward situation was saved.¹

Bernadotte quickly made himself an expert swordsman, which led to his becoming the fencing-master of the officers. From the first he displayed considerable independence of character, and it is recorded that one of his captains, whom he was destined to meet under very different circumstances, severely reprimanded him for being a "wrong-headed fellow."² But he seems to have won the favour and good opinion of three successive

¹ Hans Kloeber, 11-14, quoting Wrangel.

² P. 180, *post*.

colonels¹ of the regiment, all of whom came across him in his subsequent career. After two years of garrison duty, in the course of which he was transferred to the Grenadier or "crack" company of the regiment, Bernadotte returned to Pau on sick leave.

During this furlough he did not allow his sword or brains to rest. He fought a duel, in the park at Pau, with an officer of gendarmerie named Castaing, who received a severe wound; and he whiled away the time with a course of study which was the forerunner of a fixed habit of systematic self-education which he subsequently acquired.

A deep impression was made upon the young soldier during this furlough by the perusal of three books which were calculated to stimulate his ambition and to elevate his mind. One of them was the life of Cortés, the conqueror of Mexico. This fascinating story turned his thoughts to military adventure, and to North America as a land of grand opportunities.

The spirit of the young grenadier was also aroused by reading the lives of two French soldiers of the seventeenth century,² who rose from the ranks and became Marshals of France. What he never forgot about them was the example which they had set of chivalry towards prisoners and conquered peoples. His career will contain incidents which are directly traceable to the influence which the story of the lives of these brave and humane soldiers exercised in moulding his character. Their "feelings, daring and endurance" touched his heart, to quote Carlyle's vivid phrase, "like a live coal from the altar."

If Bernadotte arose from the study of these lives with any ambition to emulate them, it must have been a galling reflection that he had no prospect of ever realising such an aspiration under the regulations of the Bourbon regime, which laid it down that no man who did not

¹ Colonels d'Ambert, de Béthisy, and Morard d'Arces, see pp. 11-13, 77, 78, 84, 349, *post*.

² Marshals Fabert and Catinat.

possess four quarters of nobility was qualified to be an officer in the army.

It was of this arbitrary code that Carlyle wrote : " By the law of the case, no man can pretend to be the pitifullest Lieutenant of Militia till he have first verified, to the satisfaction of the Lion King, a nobility of four generations." Napoleon at St. Helena referred to this intolerable system as having been a chief cause of the Revolution, and remarked that most of the generals, of whose deeds France was so proud, had sprung from that very class which was so much despised under the *ancien régime*.

This glaring injustice was a governing influence in moulding Bernadotte's mind. It wounded the ambitious young soldier in his tenderest spot. It made him an ardent Republican. Temperamentally he was a votary of order and of discipline. What made him a believer in the cause of Liberty and Equality was his personal experience of Bourbon oppression from which nothing except a violent revolution was capable of liberating him. His liberation was at hand, because France was on the eve of a Revolution which was as drastic and terrible as any in the whole range of history.

CHAPTER II

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION—FROM PRIVATE TO SERGEANT-MAJOR

1784-1792

WHILE France was drifting towards Revolution, Bernadotte was a ranker in the Royal army. In the fourth year of his service he was transferred to Grenoble, near the Dauphiny Alps which constituted the frontier dividing France from Switzerland.

At Grenoble he spent four years, learning the details of military duty, and rising step by step through all the grades of non-commissioned rank. In 1785 he obtained two steps, becoming corporal in June and sergeant in August. In 1786 we find him writing to his brother, "If I become sergeant-major, as they lead me to hope, I shall receive at least thirty-two sols [half-pence] a day." He had to wait nearly two years before he attained the coveted rank of sergeant-major with its princely pay. In the meantime he had held the post of quartermaster. Thus it took him eight years to reach the rank of sergeant-major. The army had been reduced by almost half, and promotion was gradual. He was learning that "to climb steep hills requires slow pace at first."

At Grenoble Sergeant Bernadotte had a love affair with a young woman who bore the romantic name of Catherine L'Amour. Nothing is known except that a daughter was born who was named Olympe Louise and died soon afterwards.¹

While Bernadotte was a sergeant at Grenoble his career very nearly came to an untimely end. In the course of a severe break-down of health he fell into a

¹ Wrangel, *Frän. Jean Bernadotte's Ungdom*, Stockholm, 1889, 64.

heavy swoon. So complete and long-continued was his unconsciousness that he was officially declared by the medical officer¹ to be dead, and ordered to be removed to the morgue. A young doctor named Willars, whether for the purpose of experiment or from a doubt as to his lifelessness, obtained leave to have him removed to his quarters, where he came to himself, and thus escaped being buried alive.²

These were the years preceding the outbreak of the Revolution. In vain did the King's great minister, Necker, strive to avert it. Political influence was passing to the spokesmen of the new ideas such as Lafayette and Mirabeau. At Grenoble this period of transition was marked by frequent desertions of the soldiers of the garrison, and by riots and disturbances in the streets of the town. Bernadotte, in his letters to his brother, describes several pursuits of deserters, some of whom he captured within a few miles of the frontier. The local disturbances culminated in an *émeute* in the course of which a volley of shots was fired² and lives were lost. It was known to history as the Day of the Tiles, because the soldiers were pelted with tiles from the roofs of the houses.

One of the results of the Day of the Tiles was the removal of Bernadotte's battalion to Marseilles. On arriving at Marseilles he was billeted upon a prominent merchant of the city, who was of Irish extraction, a M. François Clary, the youngest of whose children was a pretty girl named Désirée, then almost eleven years of age. Many years afterwards, when she had become a queen, she thus described the incident to her Chamberlain³:

“ One day a soldier presented himself with a requisition billeting him in our house at Marseilles. My father, who had no wish to be disturbed by the noise which soldiers usually make, politely sent him back with a letter to his

¹ Dr. Elisée, afterwards physician to King Louis XVIII.

² The historian Michelet identifies Bernadotte as the adjutant who gave the order to fire. But he was not yet adjutant.

³ *Désirée*, par Hothschild, 30.

colonel, requesting that an officer might be billeted on us instead of a soldier. The soldier who was sent back in this way was Bernadotte."

We must not continue the quotation or forestall the future. Suffice it to say that Sergeant-Major Bernadotte and Désirée Clary were destined to meet again.¹

Every French regiment had two adjutants, one an officer and the other a non-commissioned officer. It was soon after his arrival at Marseilles that Sergeant-Major Bernadotte was made non-commissioned adjutant of the regiment, which was the highest rank to which a "ranker" could attain. His nickname was "Sergeant Belle-Jambe," which speaks for itself, but was not a badge of mere coxcombry. It is recorded that at a review the inspecting general turned to the Marquis d'Ambert, the colonel of the Royal-la-Marine Regiment, and remarked: "If your adjutant is as smart as he looks, he is a credit to his regiment." "I can assure you," replied d'Ambert, "that his smart appearance is the least of his merits."

The Marquis d'Ambert soon became the central figure in a violent *émeute* which gave Bernadotte his first opportunity of displaying what manner of man he was.

Marseilles was intoxicated by the new ideas which were characteristic of the outbreak of the French Revolution. One of these ideas was the establishment of a citizen force of National Guards which divided the military duties of the city with the Royal Garrison. Out of this incongruous dyarchy sprang an irreconcilable hostility between the citizen guardsmen, who paraded the city flaunting the Tricolour emblems of the Revolution, and the Royalist officers, like Colonel d'Ambert, who carried the white cockade of the Bourbons and looked upon the citizen militia as a rebel organisation.

While the city was in this condition of electrical excitement Colonel d'Ambert happened to return from leave. On his arrival at the city gate he was challenged by some sentries of the National Guard. A quarrel

¹ See p. 86, *post*.

ensued in the course of which the colonel called the guard *canaille*, and threatened to wipe out their whole corps with one company of his troops. He told them to take that message to the mayor and to the municipality. The news spread like wild-fire, and popular feeling became inflamed against the Royal troops and particularly against Colonel d'Ambert and his regiment.

On the following morning Bernadotte, as the chief of the non-commissioned officers of the regiment, volunteered to go to the City Hall with his fellows to make peace between the colonel and the municipality. He appears to have been making some headway when Colonel d'Ambert came on the scene, pursued by a crowd who were threatening to hang him to the nearest lamp-post.

The secretary of the municipality happened to be a young man named Barbaroux, who afterwards became noted as one of the martyrs of the Girondist party. What followed has been attested by him and by another eye-witness¹ who afterwards described the deep impression which it made upon him.

Bernadotte went to the colonel's assistance. Having extricated him from his assailants, and having collected his comrades, he fastened the attention of the angry crowd :

"Citizens of Marseilles," he said, "surely you do not wish to stain the honour of your city by an assassination. If the colonel has done wrong, let the law, of which your magistrates are the guardians, judge him. If, however, you attempt any illegal violence against him, it shall be over the dead bodies of myself and my comrades."

This speech prevailed. The colonel was rescued, and conveyed into the City Hall. Then Barbaroux came forward, and, grasping Bernadotte's hand, said, "Monsieur l'Adjudant, you will go far ; and I predict that, if circumstances are only favourable, you will have a glorious future."

Although the colonel had escaped from the mob, his danger was by no means past. He was detained in the

¹ M. Ricard d'Allaux.

City Hall, while the mayor sent a special courier to the National Assembly in Paris asking for directions and pressing for the removal of the regular troops.

In view of his Colonel's fresh source of danger Bernadotte took a daring course. He sent to the President of the National Assembly, by the hands of the municipal courier, a reasoned memorial in defence of the colonel with a covering letter to the President signed by himself and his comrades. The memorial purported to set forth the "exact truth" about the incident, and requested the Assembly to suspend their judgment until they had heard both sides.

In Paris *l'affaire d'Ambert* was a sensational nine-days' wonder and became the subject of two parliamentary debates which were reported in the journals of the day.¹ It is evident that Bernadotte's memorial, the contents of which were communicated to the House by its President, operated powerfully in favour of d'Ambert. It gave a popular colour to his case. Ultimately the Assembly, rejecting the advice of Mirabeau who would have thrown the colonel to the dogs by leaving him to be tried in Marseilles, resolved to refer his trial to a more regular tribunal. Thus was the Marquis d'Ambert rescued, with Bernadotte's help, from the jaws of the Revolution which he so feebly understood.² But it was only a reprieve. We shall come across him again in years to come.³

The d'Ambert affair was a type of the troubles in which the Royalist soldiers were frequently involved in a city like Marseilles at this turbulent time. Soldiers like Bernadotte found themselves in a dilemma between their inclination and their duty. The Revolution promised them the equality of opportunities which was denied to them by the Bourbon system. But they were soldiers of the King, and it was their duty to preserve order and

¹ *Moniteur*, 28th and 29th March, 1790.

² Sarrans, *Histoire de Bernadotte*, i. 4, 5; Pingaud, *Bernadotte, Bonaparte et les Bourbons*, 4.

³ P. 84, *post*.

discipline, and to do so in situations which required the frequent exercise of tact and presence of mind. How Bernadotte conducted himself under these trying conditions is shown by the following incident.

As he was walking with some comrades in a crowded street, he was met by an excited mob, the leader of which presented him with a tricolour cockade. He took it and fastened it to the hilt of his sword. They were not satisfied and pointed to his hat on which was the white cockade. "No," replied Bernadotte, "the white cockade remains there until my military chiefs command me to change it. A soldier cannot follow his feelings. He must obey and observe discipline; otherwise there is no guarantee for your defence or for that of the nation." His listeners, attracted by the force and readiness of the reply, applauded, and allowed him and his comrades to pass on.

Soon after the d'Ambert trouble Bernadotte's battalion was moved to the neighbouring town of Lambesc, where a new phase of the Revolution exhibited itself.¹ The rank and file, having caught the infection of revolt, proposed to depose their colonel and elect Bernadotte in his place. The incident occurred in a church which had been converted into barracks. The young adjutant, suiting his action to the place, mounted the pulpit, and, having thanked his fellow-soldiers for the expression of their confidence in himself, persuaded them to return to the path of discipline and obedience.

Soon afterwards Bernadotte was sent to the Isle de Rhé, where we find him assisting as best man at the wedding of the bandmaster to the *vivandière* of the regiment, the name of which was now changed to "the 60th Regiment of Infantry."

It was at the Isle de Rhé that Bernadotte received the welcome news that the ancient barriers against promotion by merit had been removed by the National Assembly, and that the rank of officer was opened to efficient non-commissioned officers like himself. In April 1792 he received his commission as Lieutenant in the 36th Regi-

¹ Cf. *Le Moniteur*, 12th and 14th June, 11th July 1790.



BERNADOTTE, SOLDIER OF KING LOUIS XVI.

ment, after serving eleven years in the ranks. In the French army there were seven ¹ other non-commissioned officers who carried marshals' batons in their knapsacks. Only two ² had a longer apprenticeship than Bernadotte.

Several letters which were written by Bernadotte to his brother at this period have been preserved. They are couched in a spirit of feverish elation. "I hope soon to be captain. I am at present fourth lieutenant," he writes. "But these reflections do not please me so much as the thought of Liberty, of which I know to-day the precious worth."

When war had been declared against Austria, Bernadotte's letters to his brother exhibited a Gascon emotionalism which to the end of his life remained characteristic of him.

"Perhaps," he writes, "I shall swell the number of brave men who have perished in defence of their country. Take charge of a thousand embraces for my dear mother and sister, and accept the friendship of a brother, who loves you beyond the power of words, and who will always be worthy of belonging to you." ³

Before starting for the front he sent a message to his family which reflects, as in a mirror, the young officer's mind:

"Whatever happens, I shall not desert my post; and my honour and my duty shall always be my guiding motives. . . . Farewell, my dear brother. I beg of you to express to my dear mother and sister my affectionate feelings for them. Embrace them for me. . . . Receive my affectionate regards, and believe me that I shall always follow the call of my conscience (*le cri de ma conscience*)."⁴

¹ Lefèbvre, Masséna, Murat, Victor, Oudinot, Soult and Ney.

² Lefèbvre and Masséna.

³ Wrangel, 77, 78.

⁴ Id. 84.

CHAPTER III

THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMY—FROM LIEUTENANT TO GENERAL

1792-1794

WAR having been declared against the Austrian Empire, Bernadotte was now sent to the front as a subaltern in the Revolutionary Army. He was one of King Louis XVI's soldiers ; but Louis XVI was King only in name. The uncrowned monarch of the moment was Danton, a titanic demagogue whose motto was "Audacity, and again audacity, and always audacity."

The cause for which the young subaltern had to fight was summed up in a popular phrase, "natural frontiers." This intoxicating catchword was coined by Danton, who thus expanded it : "The limits of France are defined by Nature. We shall read them at four points—the ocean, the banks of the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees." Of these "natural frontiers" the Rhine was the most desired and the most difficult to win and to hold. To win it necessitated the conquest of a large tract of Austrian territory on the western side of the river, and of Belgium which was an Austrian province. In other words, it involved a war with Austria.

This stupendous idea that Nature had designated the Rhine as the eastern frontier of France turned a war of conquest into a crusade. Bernadotte and his comrades regarded themselves as crusaders carrying out the decrees which Nature had written imperatively on the map of Europe. This alluring doctrine that the Rhine was the natural frontier of France and that seas and rivers were the natural boundaries of a nation made

a deep impression upon Bernadotte's mind. Long afterwards it influenced his political aims and outlooks in different times and in distant places.¹

The army in which Bernadotte was serving had to cope with a domestic enemy which was far more ruthless than the Austrians. This was "The Terror," which overhung France like a black thunder-cloud with the guillotine for its lightning. Of all the victims of the Terror none suffered more undeservedly than the generals and higher officers of the army who were struck down one after the other in the years 1793 and 1794. Sometimes they were the victims of groundless suspicion, or of the jealousy of the politicians. Sometimes they were executed *pour encourager les autres* because they failed to win battles.

Not only were the generals liable to be summoned to Paris and to be sent by the Revolutionary Tribunal to the guillotine for some imaginary crime. They were also subjected in camps and battle-fields to the tyranny of the Representatives of the People, such as St. Just, who were officially attached to the armies as spies and task-masters with virtual powers of life and death.

Within little more than a year of the time when Bernadotte became an officer, three successive commanders-in-chief of the armies in which he served were sent to the guillotine one after another. These were Generals Custine, Beauharnais² and Houchard, brave soldiers who were made the innocent victims of the Terrorists. What must have been Bernadotte's feelings when he heard the news of these judicial assassinations, and of their tragical circumstances? General Houchard, when he had been taunted at his trial with cowardice by his judges, bared his breast, which was furrowed with sabrecuts, and exclaimed, "Look and read my reply." They looked and signed his death warrant.

Bernadotte himself had a narrow escape of following his chiefs to the guillotine. The strict discipline which

¹ See pp. 258, 284, 305, 314, *post*.

² First husband of the Empress Josephine, and father of Eugène de Beauharnais.

he maintained was misrepresented, according to the revolutionary jargon of that day, as "a despotic interference with the liberty of his subordinates." His arrest was ordered, but was postponed as the army was on the eve of a critical engagement. A police officer, who was ordered to watch him during the day, became the witness of a remarkable scene. Bernadotte's men were giving way. When an impassioned appeal failed to rally them, he took off his epaulettes, threw them on the ground, and said, "If you dishonour yourselves by flight, I refuse to remain your colonel." Some soldiers left the ranks, picked up the epaulettes, and pressed them into his hand. The situation was saved, and in the evening, when the police agent's report had been received, the order of arrest was cancelled, and the guillotine was cheated of a victim.¹

This scene was characteristic of the tumultuous melodrama in which Bernadotte had to play a prominent part in 1793 and 1794. The army in which he was serving at this period resembled a military mob. It was liable to be carried away, like a mob, by whirlwinds of panic or of passion which conventional methods of discipline were unable to control. Where Bernadotte surpassed the other commanders of the Revolutionary army was in his peculiar power of wielding at will that fierce democracy.

He was tall and virile, with a gift of stirring speech, a popularity which was due to his careful attention to the comfort and welfare of his men, and a quick resourcefulness and presence of mind in an emergency. These qualities enabled him to cope with a problem of military discipline which baffled some of the best of the officers and generals of that time. He was conscious of his own power—"Having been a soldier since my boyhood," he wrote to his brother, "I know the errors and follies of which soldiers are capable. I also know something of the way in which their affection and respect can be won, when it is not too late to recall them to their duty."² It will be found that Bernadotte's "way" was to appeal

¹ Sarrans, i. 7.

² Wrangel, 84-86.

to men's emotions and better selves. Two instances will suffice to illustrate his power of controlling the troops of the Revolution. One was the saving of a rout; the other was the quelling of a mutiny.

On the occasion of an attack on an Austrian fort,¹ some raw volunteers caused a panic by firing upon French comrades by mistake for Austrians. Mounted troops and artillery turned and fled; the column was thrown into confusion; and the superior officers were utterly incapable of restoring order. Suddenly Lieutenant Bernadotte emerged from the mêlée, caught the attention of the broken battalion, shouting, protesting, imploring, commanding, and having to deflect musket-barrels with the point of his sword. He then rushed to the rear in order to stem the rout. His horse was knocked down, but he held his position. Then came a passionate harangue, to which a sufficient number of men responded to enable him to check the confusion and to form a line of battle. The gunners returned to their post; and he placed men on guard to fire on the drivers if they should turn to fly. Calm was restored.²

At a later stage of the campaign, when he had reached the rank of colonel, he was commanding the left wing of General Goguet's division in an engagement in Belgium. Suddenly the right wing and the centre gave way and retired in the face of the enemy. When Bernadotte turned back to cover the retreat, he found that a mutiny had broken out, that General Goguet had been assassinated, and that the other officers were in danger of sharing Goguet's fate. Bernadotte assumed command, and succeeded in reforming the troops and in recalling them to their duty.³

On other occasions of the same kind the young Gascon rallied his regiment, sometimes by an effective speech, sometimes by dramatic action, and sometimes in the last resort by drawing his sword. According to the exag-

¹ Rulzheim, near Mainz.

² Wrangel, 99, 100; cf. *Wissembourg*, par Chuquet, 18.

³ Sarrans, i. 7.

gerated jargon of that day, he earned the popular title of *Jupiter Stator des Mutins*. It was as a controller of men (*un entraîneur des hommes*), even more than as a leader in the field, that he first singled himself out from the others.

The following is a description of Bernadotte as he impressed himself upon a Gascon compatriot in the war of the Revolution. It paints him as he figured in rallying routed troops or subduing a mutiny :

“ The place to see him was in the midst of his troops. His features were finely outlined and expressed a sublime animation. Sparks of fire seemed to flash from his eyes. His black hair was uncovered and floated in the breeze. To see him towering head and shoulders above his soldiers, you would say that the God of armies had come down on earth, and had entered the lists in order to inspire the courage of the combatants.”¹

It was during these campaigns that Bernadotte became associated with four generals who became his intimate friends and trusted comrades. These were Jourdan, Kléber, Marceau and Ney. Jourdan, his commander-in-chief, was an honest man and a competent general, but he was not an inspiring leader of men. Very different was Kléber. He was cast by nature for the rôle of a military hero. Napoleon once called him “ the god Mars in Uniform ” and declared that there was “ no grander sight than Kléber on the day of battle.”

Marceau came of a legal family, enlisted at sixteen, was a sergeant at the outbreak of the Revolution, and rose to the rank of general. His was a singularly attractive personality. His portrait shows a dashing hussar of the Revolution with a face like Robert Louis Stevenson. He had the reputation, says the *Cambridge Modern History*,² of being a man “ of honourable and generous character.” Bernadotte made Marceau’s acquaintance by saving him from a mutinous mob which were resisting his orders and threatening to overpower him. Berna-

¹ *Le Château de Pau*, par Basele de Lagréze, 296.

² viii. 197.



GENERAL KLÉBER.
"The god Mars in uniform."
After the portrait by Ansiaux.

dotte arrived just in time to rescue him with drawn sword and a torrent of apt declamation.¹

Junior to the others was Ney, who was destined to meet Bernadotte on the field of battle both as a comrade and as an enemy.²

In 1794 the notorious Terrorist St. Just, who was Robespierre's *alter ego*, visited the army in which Bernadotte was serving. St. Just was the most pitiless and the most picturesque of the instruments of the Reign of Terror. Carlyle has portrayed him as "a youth of slight stature with mild mellow voice, enthusiast olive complexion, and long black hair." Yet this pale poetic stripling, backed as he was by the power of the Revolutionary Government, held the life of every general in the hollow of his hand; and when he undertook a mission to the front, it took the form of a Bloody Assize.

Bernadotte met him twice. On one occasion Kléber and Marceau were invaded by an unruly deputation of twelve sergeants complaining of discomforts and asking to be given more luxurious quarters. St. Just was present. Kléber sent for Bernadotte and told him to teach the sergeants "that a camp was not a club." Bernadotte having to deal with sergeants and not with mere raw volunteers, at once proceeded to strong measures. St. Just was astonished to see him draw his sword, fall on the sergeants with the flat of it, and conduct them back to their camp, where the troops sided with him and greeted the sergeants with banter and ridicule.

On another occasion, after an engagement, Kléber presented Bernadotte to St. Just as having distinguished himself by his coolness and presence of mind. St. Just condescended to "honour" the colonel with a fraternal embrace and proposed to exercise his power of appointing him to the rank of general.

Bernadotte refused this offer of promotion; and we are informed of his reasons by General Sarrazin, the Staff Officer of the army, who has left a quantity of

¹ Sarrans, i. 8.

² Pages 27, 94, 202, 292, *post*.

memoirs and souvenirs of the campaigns in which he fought side by side with Bernadotte. He writes :

“ I then saw Bernadotte for the first time. His Gascon accent convinced me that he was my countryman, and his handsome appearance impressed me with the hope of forming a friendship with him.” He gives the following explanation of Bernadotte’s peculiar power of managing French troops and endearing himself to them :

“ Gifted by nature with a handsome bearing and a commanding aspect, he was beloved by his troops, because he knew all the details of his duties as commander, and was successful in looking after the well-being of his subordinates. His kindness was not more marked than his firmness in preserving discipline.”

Bernadotte told Sarrazin of his refusal to accept promotion, giving as his reason that he believed himself to be deficient in the talents necessary for so high a rank as that of general. Sarrazin laughed heartily at a modesty “ so seldom practised among Gascons,” and assured him that he was already much superior to many of the generals under whom he was serving. Bernadotte having slept over his advice came to him next day and said : “ If that is your opinion, should I be offered again, I shall accept.”¹ Bernadotte will often be found refusing dazzling opportunities for reasons of prudence or of principle.

The military results of these two years’ campaigning (1793, 1794) were the conquest of the western banks of the Rhine and of Belgium. To recite all the battles, skirmishes and sieges in which Bernadotte took part would exceed the limits of this chapter. Let four of them serve as examples. The first was in Belgium, where he was entrusted with the defence of Prémont, an important position covering the line of advance.

¹ Sarrazin, *Mémoires*, 28–303, and *Supplement*, 11 ; id., *Guerres Civiles*, 301, 302.

Although the odds were almost three to one against him, he kept the enemy in check for seven hours.

A notable opportunity occurred at the battle of Fleurus, which was the victorious turning-point of the campaign. He was ordered to clear some woods from which the enemy were directing a heavy fire upon the French position. He is described by spectators as advancing at the head of his troops, charging the enemy's position, retaking lost ground, clearing and carrying the woods, pursuing the enemy to their camp and taking the greater number of the prisoners who surrendered during the day. It was after this battle that he received his brevet of promotion to the rank of general of brigade, which was expressed to be conferred upon him "for bravery and brilliant conduct (*pour traits de bravoure et actions d'éclat*)."¹

At the battle of the Roer in Belgium he plunged into the river with his troops, and Kléber reported, "I cannot sufficiently praise General Bernadotte. Always under a heavy fire, he directed his troops with heroic sang-froid. His courage and intrepidity decided the result of the battle."² Again he distinguished himself at the siege of Maestricht, where the Austrians made their last stand. It was then that he was promoted to be a general of division and appointed Military Governor of the captured fortress.³

The year 1794, the year of the conquest of Belgium, was for Bernadotte an *annus mirabilis*. In January he had been a captain. In February he became lieutenant-colonel, in April colonel, in June brigadier-general, in November general of division.⁴ His theatre of war was now shifted from the Netherlands to the Rhine. At Cologne he was received by the Mayor, whom he was destined to meet under different circumstances twenty years afterwards.⁵

¹ Sarrans, 9n.

² Kléber, par Reaulx, 72 ; Sarrans, i. 9.

³ Sarrazin, *Philosopher*, ii. 2 : id., *Mém.*, 27.

⁴ From the Archives of the French Ministry of War.

⁵ P. 305, *post*.

While Bernadotte had been campaigning on the Rhine and in Belgium, the Terror had run its hideous course in France. Its culminating infamy had been the execution of Queen Marie Antoinette. The Terrorists hounded her to death as "the Austrian woman" with whose countrymen France was at war. English sentiment, which had been held in suspense, now found expression in Edmund Burke's famous lamentation, which time and repetition have failed to hackney, that "the age of chivalry was gone and the glory of Europe was extinguished."

Bernadotte had no hand or part in these horrible events. His only connection with the Terror was that he narrowly escaped becoming one of its victims. He was a child of the Revolution, but he was a complete stranger to its crimes.

PART II
*THE FRENCH DIRECTORY*¹

1795-1799

¹ This period has been treated in greater detail in *Bernadotte, the First Phase* (John Murray, London), chapters xx-lxxv, pp. 112-476.

CHAPTER IV

THE ARMY OF SAMBRE AND MEUSE—THE WATCH ON THE RHINE

1795-1796

THIS chapter covers two strenuous years in which Bernadotte laid the foundation of his military reputation. The conquest of the Netherlands by the Army of Sambre and Meuse¹ had made the Rhine the eastern frontier of France for a stretch of more than two hundred miles. In its upper reaches the same purpose was accomplished by other armies commanded by two distinguished generals, who had Royalist sympathies, General Moreau and General Pichegru. We shall hear of them again.

Of all the armies of the Republic the Army of Sambre and Meuse had the highest reputation for good discipline, for orderly conduct, and for the purity of the aims and ideals of their commanders. Six of these commanders won an honourable place in French military history. These were the commander-in-chief, Jourdan, who made up for want of brilliancy by his transparent honesty; Kléber, Marceau and Bernadotte, a remarkable trio who more than any others reflected the spirit of clanship which animated this army; Lefèbvre, a hardy old warrior who looked like a sergeant and ultimately became a duke; and Ney, a modest hero, who was destined to become a prince, and to win the more precious distinction of being christened by his comrades "the bravest of the brave." Another general of lesser fame and character was Sarrazin, who became Bernadotte's chief of the staff. Fortunately for posterity he took copious notes

¹ The "Army of Sambre and Meuse" was given that title by a decree of the National Convention after the victory of Fleurus, which was won near the confluence of the rivers Sambre and Meuse.

of all that he saw and heard, and he has left many interesting memorials of his reminiscences.

In the campaign of 1795 Bernadotte went through the bitter experience of serving a weak and untrustworthy Government. The Terror had been overthrown on the 9th Thermidor (27th July, 1794), when Robespierre and St. Just had followed their many victims to the guillotine. The victorious party, who were called "the Thermidorians," were less cruel but were also less idealistic and more corrupt than the Terrorists.

A new Constitution was now set up under which Bernadotte was about to serve for four eventful years in various capacities and offices. This Constitution is known to history as the "Directory." It consisted of a Legislature which comprised two Chambers, the Council of Ancients and the Council of Five Hundred, and of an Executive comprising five Directors elected by the Legislature. The Constitution had one fatal defect. It provided no constitutional means for settling a conflict between the Legislature and the Executive. As a result, it was doomed, from the very start, to maintain its existence by a series of military *coups d'états*, and finally to become the footstool of an ambitious general.¹

Of the Thermidorian party there were three politicians who will figure prominently in Bernadotte's career, namely Barras, Sieyès and Fouché. Paul Barras was the best known of the Directors, and the only one who retained his office as long as the Directory lasted. He was a *déclassé* nobleman whose unscrupulous character typified the system of which he was the principal figure. He was "not a bad fellow" in the conventional sense of that loose expression; and the unabashed frankness of his memoirs gives some value and interest to his evidence when he enters the witness-box. The ex-abbé Sieyès was a pompous pamphleteer who posed as a constitution maker. His advice had not been availed of in the making of the Directorial Constitution. So he went abroad as a diplomat and lay in wait to destroy the

¹ See pp. 57, 96, 108, *post*.



ST. JUST (THE *FIDUS ACHATES* OF ROBESPIERRE)

In the uniform of a Representative of the People with the Army

After the portrait by Raffet.

Directory later on. Fouché was an ex-Terrorist, a cold and calculating politician who was always on the look-out for a rising star to hitch his wagon to. Bernadotte was not yet a rising star ; but his turn was coming.

During the transitional period which followed the fall of Robespierre and preceded the establishment of the Directory the position of the generals of the Army of Sambre and Meuse became intolerable. They were expected to cross the Rhine and to invade Germany. But the Government provided them with no materials for bridging the river, no pay, no guns and no ammunition.

The condition of the French soldiers was deplorable and their spirit became dangerous. At a Council of War, which was held to consider the dire situation of the armies, Bernadotte gave the following advice which carried the other generals with him :

“ It is better for us to perish by drowning in crossing the Rhine, or by the sword of the Austrian after having crossed it, than to give the enemies of our glory a favourable opportunity of saying that we have not dared to face courageously the danger which awaited us. So far as the materials and organisation of the army are concerned, I admit the odds are all against us ; but the circumstances in which we are placed leave us no alternative. If we resolutely strive for victory, she may be ours. If she should fail us, death at all events will be our refuge.”¹

The Council decided, in the venturous spirit of this speech, to make a bridge of river-boats, to cross the Rhine, and to invade Germany.

Twice in the course of six or seven months the Army of Sambre and Meuse crossed the Rhine by their bridge of boats and invaded Germany, and twice they were repulsed and forced to retreat and recross the river.

In each of these campaigns Bernadotte led the vanguard in the advance and the rearguard in retreat. In each campaign the army (when they came to recross the river)

¹ Cf. Sarrans, i. 10.

found the bridge of boats destroyed. On the first occasion it was in flames. On the second occasion the enemy had broken the bridge by driving heavy rafts against the boats. On each occasion while the bridge was being reconstructed, Bernadotte held the enemy in check with a sang-froid and precision which, according to General Jourdan, excited the admiration of everyone, and according to an historian of the campaign, "astonished the Austrians."¹

Only once did the Austrians retaliate by crossing the Rhine, seizing the fortress of Creuznach, and threatening the French rear. Creuznach was garrisoned by some Hungarian Pandours who ambuscaded a French regiment and cut off the heads of their prisoners before the eyes of their retreating comrades. Indignant at these barbarities, Bernadotte, putting himself at the head of his infantry, drove the Austrians out of Creuznach at the point of the bayonet, and pursued them so closely that he was on their heels as they crossed the bridge, which spanned the river Nahe. An officer's leg was carried off by a cannon-ball at Bernadotte's side. He was noted for his readiness to expose himself in battle. No generals of that time were more so than he and Murat.

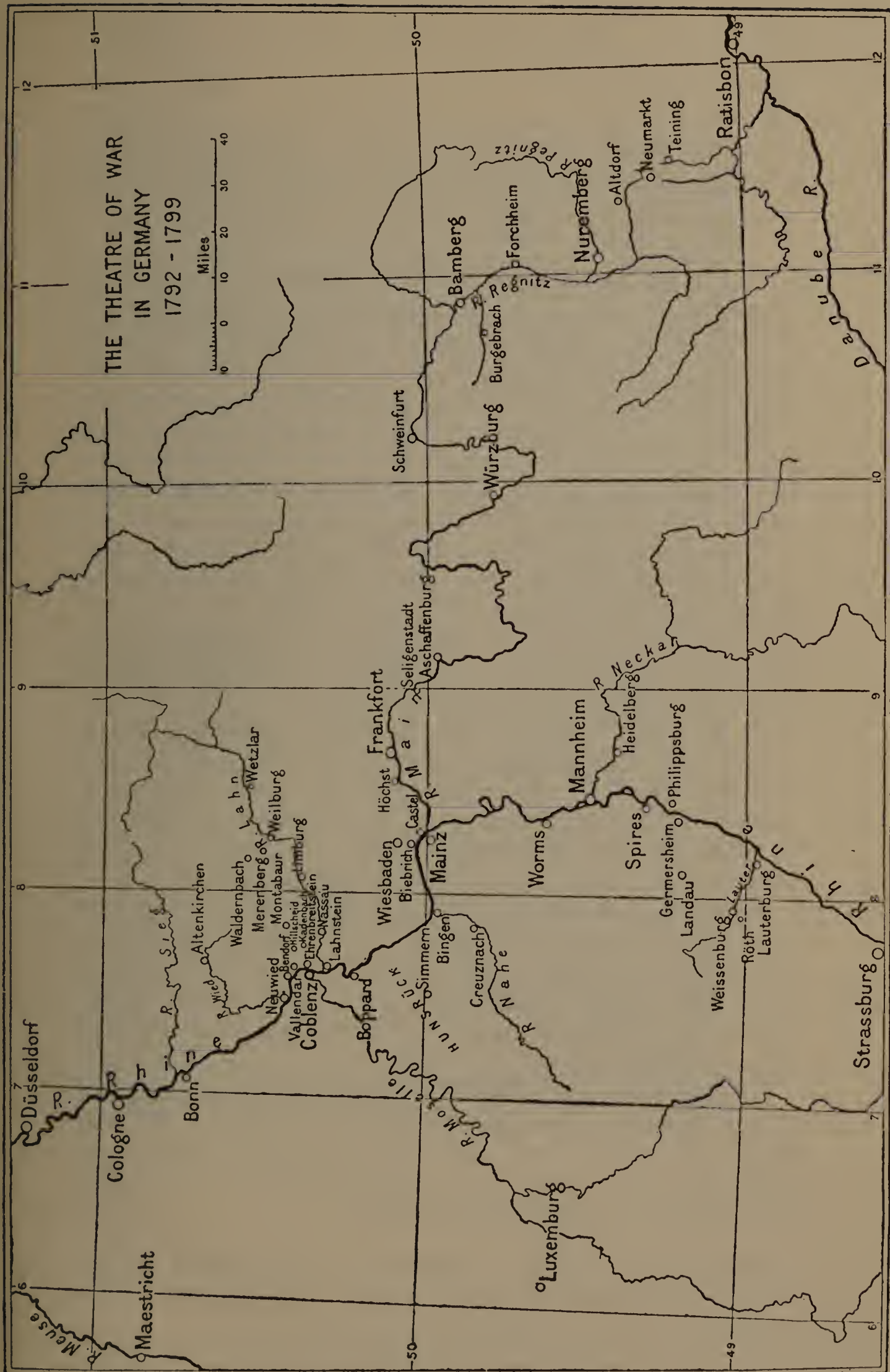
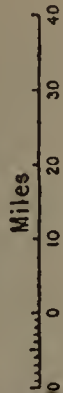
The French army, after ten days' rest, invaded Germany for the third time, and for the third time Bernadotte led the van. Now came one of the greatest opportunities of his military career. It created an immense sensation and placed him in the front rank of the divisional generals of the time. General Sarrazin, who took part in the operations, has left a graphic account of Bernadotte's share in them.²

The army had penetrated into the heart of Germany, two hundred and fifty miles from its headquarters on the Rhine and about the same distance from Vienna. A glance at the map will show how hazardous was this move. Bernadotte, who occupied the most advanced

¹ Jourdan, *Campagne de 1796*, 40, 54, 67-71; *Victoires, Conquêtes*, vi. 42; Jomini, viii. 155.

² Sarrazin, *Phil.*, 22-24.

THE THEATRE OF WAR IN GERMANY 1792 - 1799



post, found himself, on the 22nd August, with a small vanguard of 9,000 men near Ratisbon at a place called Teining.¹ Here he was attacked by the Archduke Charles with 28,000 Austrians. General Sarrazin has described what he saw :

“ On the 22nd the Archduke attacked the French. The engagement was a sanguinary one, and success was diversified during the whole day. The village of Teining was taken and retaken several times. The streets were strewn with dead bodies, and towards the evening the village was set on fire, the enemy being persuaded that it was the only means of dislodging the troops which were entrenched in the houses. Meanwhile, the Archduke ordered his right wing to attack Bernadotte’s left.

“ Bernadotte’s position became critical, as the Austrians had made themselves masters of the only road by which the French could retreat. Convinced of the necessity of retaking the lost ground, Bernadotte placed himself at the head of his reserve, consisting of about four thousand men.

“ ‘ You know, my friends,’ said the general to them, ‘ what care I have always taken of your welfare, since I had the happiness of commanding such brave fellows as yourselves. The opportunity now presents itself of testifying your grateful sense of it, of deserving well of your country, and of covering yourselves with glory.’

“ Although they had fought from daybreak, and it was then nearly night, these few words served to reanimate the soldiers, and caused them to forget the fatigues of the day. They all exclaimed, with the greatest enthusiasm, that they were ready to follow their general to the very bottom of hell.

“ Bernadotte then formed his men in close column, and charged the centre of the enemies’ line. The Austrians, staggered by the daring movement, though three times more numerous, made but a weak resistance, and retired in disorder to their former position.”

Bernadotte was thus enabled at ten o’clock in the evening to retreat in good order to Neumarkt. The

¹ Jomini, ix. 2 ; see map.



BERNADOTTE AT THE BATTLE OF TEINING, AUGUST 1796.

After a print of the period.

night march was marked by an incident of which General Sarrazin gives the following vivid description :

“ During this march an accident occurred which, with less disciplined troops, might have been attended with the most fatal consequences. Towards midnight a howitzer caisson took fire, in the centre of the column. There was a succession of explosions, similar to the running fire of artillery. The troops in the van and in the rear, conceiving the centre attacked, formed themselves in battle array, as if exercising, loudly requiring to be led forward to the enemy. I have often heard Bernadotte say that this confidence of the troops, notwithstanding the darkness of the night and the great losses they had experienced in the affair of the day, would always appear to him as the most pleasing moment of his life.”

Bernadotte's division now became the rearguard of the whole army, and it became his duty to cover a general retreat. How steady was his retirement and how obstinate was his resistance is proved by comparing time with distance. He gave way slowly for a distance of forty miles keeping the pursuing Austrians at bay for seven days, and disputing every inch of the ground with an enemy numbering three to one. The historian of the army described these operations as “ a glorious combat and a slow retreat.”¹

This retreat was seized upon by the people and by the Government of France as a bright spot in what was otherwise a disastrous campaign. Barras, who was the head of the Directorial Government, wrote in his memoirs :

“ The rest of the campaign would have been still more disastrous had it not been for the intrepid resistance made to the Austrians by Bernadotte, the general of the rearguard. During this retreat, as skilful as it was daring, Bernadotte drew upon himself for the resources which it was necessary to improvise in order to meet events unforeseen by the general-in-chief. On this most critical occasion Bernadotte displayed skill and resourcefulness which some day, applied on a larger scale, will reveal to

¹ Desprez, 69.

Europe one of its greatest generals. May France preserve to its glory the generous soldiers who are now springing from the bosom of the soil of liberty ! Foreign and French military men said at the time that there was something of Xenophon in Bernadotte.”¹

Bernadotte took an honourable part in other feats of arms in the course of these stirring campaigns. But enough has been said to show how he figured in the field. Let us turn to his relations with his comrades, and to his attitude towards prisoners and towards conquered territories. His invariable humanity towards those who were at his mercy was the finest feather in his *panache*.

He was lucky in his comrades ; and the battle-field served to test their comradeship. To Generals Kléber and Marceau he became bound by hoops of steel. Kléber was a hero of Homeric mould. There was something in him of Cœur-de-Lion, something too of the younger Fairfax. He did not shrink from indulging in free and unguarded criticisms of the corrupt Directorial Government, and it was sometimes said that Bernadotte's independent attitude with regard to public questions was traceable to Kléber's example and influence.

General Kléber's appreciation of Bernadotte was unbounded. Two of the many tributes which he paid to him deserve to be quoted. At the opening of the campaign Kléber wrote to the commander-in-chief asking for Bernadotte to be sent to him. The following is an extract from the letter. No greater praise could be accorded by one soldier to another :

“ You propose to send me reinforcements. I accept with pleasure, if at their head you will send me a man who is devoted to his duty, who understands my methods of operation, upon whom I can depend with absolute confidence, who is capable of transmitting to his troops the electric fire with which I would inspire him. . . . You know very well that it is of Bernadotte that I speak. I ask you, my dear Jourdan, to send me him.

¹ Barras, ii. 155 ; (Eng. Tr.) ii. 186.



TWO PORTRAITS OF GENERAL MARCEAU.

“A brave soldier and a chivalrous gentleman”—killed in September 1796.

. . . Once the Rhine is crossed I will send him back to you. . . .”

Two years afterwards, when the campaign of the Rhine was finished, Kléber wrote to the Government describing Bernadotte as “an officer who is firm and capable of electrifying an army.”¹

Marceau was a hero of a more romantic type. There was something in him of Sir Philip Sidney, something of General Gordon. His ideas and Bernadotte's were in close sympathy. At the opening of the campaign, when the army was abandoned by the Government and reduced to desperation, Marceau is found writing: “I can no longer place reliance upon my troops or upon anything else than my readiness to die.” Almost on the same day Bernadotte wrote: “I am not weak enough to wish for death. But I believe that unless the Government acts with strength, a glorious death will be the greatest benefit that can befall a French general.”

When Marceau fell fatally wounded in the last retreat to the Rhine, Bernadotte galloped to his side. “Farewell, my comrade,” said Marceau, “I am dying. We shall never meet again. But do not let me see, before I die, my troops forced to retire in disorder. The mere idea kills me.” “No, my dear friend,” replied Bernadotte, “you will not have that chagrin. So long as the troops are under your eyes, they will defend themselves with courage. Be calm, the retreat is being carried out in good order.”²

Bernadotte was well known for his chivalrous attention to prisoners. He always visited them after a battle and paid particular attention to their ease and comfort. After the capture of Creuznach he went his rounds, as usual, and came, in their turn, to a group of prisoners who were French Royalists fighting with the Austrians against France. An inexorable law of the Republic

Kléber, par Pajol, 173, 258; cf. Zurlinden, *Napoléon et ses Maréchaux*, 61.

² Marceau-Serjeant, 47; cf. *Marceau*, par Parfait, 390; id., par Maze, 219, 221.

condemned to the scaffold all French *émigrés* who were taken prisoners under arms as well as those who harboured and helped them. Supposing them to be Austrians, he asked them to what corps they belonged. "You see we are French," was the reply. "You mean Belgians," said Bernadotte with a significant look of warning; and before the day was over he took the serious risk of arranging their exchange.¹

Bernadotte was also conspicuous for his scrupulous respect for life and property in conquered territory. He went so far as to refuse gifts from a conquered enemy except on terms of adequate payment; and his refusals were usually accompanied by some high-flown phrase. It was said of him that *il aimait s'empanacher d'un beau sentiment*. It was one of his Gascon qualities.

His respect for enemies' property was not always appreciated by his inferiors, some of whom blamed him for intercepting what they regarded as the legitimate fruits of victory. Their point of view was represented by General Sarrazin, who is sometimes found playing the part of Sancho Panza to Bernadotte's Don Quixote. Sarrazin tells the following story, which is illustrative of the difference between Bernadotte's standard and his own.

After the capture of a German town² Bernadotte refused to accept a gift of two chargers offered by the municipal authorities of the place, declaring that "Republicans make war for the purpose of spreading the blessings of liberty and not for the purpose of receiving gifts."

General Sarrazin represents himself as having been deeply pained by the disappointment of the authorities at Bernadotte's refusal of their gift. So he offered to console them by appropriating the two chargers to his own use in exchange for a handful of *mandats*, which were the worthless paper currency of the Republic. Bernadotte, seeing his chief of the staff riding one of the chargers on parade, immediately placed him under arrest. Sarrazin indignantly produced his receipt and patriotically declared that no Republican could question

¹ Sarrazin, i. 11, 12.

² Seligenstadt.

the value of a *mandat*. The point was unanswerable from a constitutional point of view. He was released. But Bernadotte took care to see that the chargers were restored to their original owners; and peace was not patched up between the two generals until a challenge from Sarrazin to a duel had been waived aside by a friendly gesture from his chief.¹

On the occasion of the capture of Nuremberg Bernadotte was offered a *douceur* by the Burgomasters as an inducement to keep order in the city. He refused it, declaring that "the only reward he required for preserving discipline was that the city magistrates should pay attention to his sick and wounded."

Subsequently he was deeply annoyed when a Paris newspaper² announced that he had "sacked the ancient city of Nuremberg." He indited an indignant letter to the *Moniteur*, in which he repudiated the "revolting calumny," claimed "just reparation," and concluded by hoping that the Government would not hesitate to expose the infamous libel in all its blackness (*toute la noirceur*).³

At first the Government did not take Bernadotte's complaint very seriously. Sacking an enemy's city was not an unpardonable crime in their eyes. But, when he asked to be allowed to retire on half-pay, they realised that this modern Xenophon was eccentrically sensitive. So they addressed to him a laudatory letter advising him to "treat with silent contempt the unfounded reports of the enemies of his glory," and adding that they relied upon his talents and patriotism to continue ably serving his country.

General Sarrazin tells us that it was General Kléber who succeeded in dissuading Bernadotte from retiring on half-pay. He cites their conversation in several places so fully that it can be presented in the form of dialogue. The two generals were sitting at a barrack window which overlooked the wonderful river which was the *causa bellorum*.

¹ Sarrazin, *Phil.*, ii. 15-18; *Mém.*, 52-54.

² *Messenger du Soir*, No. 22. ³ *Le Moniteur*, 10th November, 1796.

“ *General Bernadotte.* Our task is accomplished. The Rhine has become the eastern frontier of France. There is no more glory or advancement in store for us soldiers. I long to return home and serve France as a citizen.

“ *General Kléber.* If you return to France, my dear Bernadotte, with your frank disposition and love of justice, I foretell that you will perish before three months are over.

“ *General Bernadotte.* Perish! I shall live at Pau, far away from the centre of Government.

“ *General Kléber.* Not only is the Government composed of five robbers, but every little village is governed by a mayor of the same stamp. Like master, like man. The secret police, which is, in regard to politics, what the science of mining is to the art of war, is confided to a set of scoundrels who abuse their power to glut their vengeance, and to cause the most virtuous character to perish, or at least to suffer disgrace.

“ *General Bernadotte.* How can I suffer disgrace if I follow the call of duty and of conscience?

“ *General Kléber.* In vain will you conduct yourself as an honest citizen: they will counterfeit your handwriting; they will accuse you of a traitorous correspondence of which you never had the least idea, and, through the perfidy of envious enemies, whom your merit will raise against you, all your fine projects of philosophy and retreat will only tend to cause you to perish on a scaffold as a traitor to your country, as was the case with Custine, Beauharnais, Houchard, and many other brave military men.

“ *General Bernadotte.* The Terror is a thing of the past. Why should the Government persecute soldiers like you and me?

“ *General Kléber.* Our governors are lawyers, jealous of the victories of their generals. They are base, uninformed, proud, vindictive, and cruel—in a word, possess only a genius for doing evil.

“ *General Bernadotte.* If they are so bad as you say, it is they who will perish.

“ *General Kléber.* Yes, their dominion cannot last long; Providence always, sooner or later, does justice on the wicked and recompenses the good. But, mean-

while, await patiently that happy period in the bosom of your military comrades and do not go and offer yourself up to those tigers thirsting for blood who have for four years preyed upon the vitals of our unhappy country.

“*General Bernadotte.* I have no fear of meeting tigers at Pau. My countrymen are enthusiastic about me, and they are honest republicans like myself.

“*General Kléber.* I admit that you might be happy for a month in your rural life, but no sooner would you hear the sound of the drums of the National Guards, than recollections dear to your heart would make you regret the army. You were born to live in camps, and to die upon the field of battle. Do you really believe that the vociferations of the Jacobins of your village will not make you again wish to hear the acclamations of applause with which your grenadiers have so often hailed the excellent manœuvres you have caused them to execute on the day of battle?

“*General Bernadotte.* Perhaps you are right. But now that the Rhine is the frontier of France, what need is there of camps and battle, what prospect of glory or advancement? Besides, I am home-sick. I long to return to my family.

“*General Kléber.* The army of Sambre and Meuse is your family. We have for three years fought together in the same ranks. I always felt a brother’s tenderness for you; and as a sincere friend, I request you to continue with us.”¹

Bernadotte yielded to Kléber’s advice and cancelled his application for his retirement.

During the winter of 1796 the army went into winter quarters at Coblenz. General Bernadotte was now appointed Military Governor of Coblenz, with 20,000 men under his command. He was regarded, and doubtless he proudly regarded himself, as the Warden of the famous river, the possession of which was the guerdon of the campaigns of the previous two years.

It was during this peaceful interlude that the military Governor of Coblenz made the acquaintance of the family

¹ Sarrazin, *Phil.*, ii. 90–92.

of a rich banker named Potgeisser, whose two daughters were the belles of the city. Sarrazin says that Bernadotte refrained from paying his addresses to one of the young ladies on the ground of disparity of years. He was thirty-three, she was sixteen. A German writer gives a patriotic colour to the incident.

“ Whether Trantchen with the brown eyes like a doe, or Lischen with the blond tresses, was the more charming was hard to decide. Neither was it worth while to attempt it, as the father made no secret of the fact that he would never give one of his daughters to a French officer. Bernadotte had therefore to console himself with the knowledge that both preferred him to all other admirers.”¹

At Coblenz, in October 1796, Bernadotte received the news of his sister's death, leaving his mother and his elder brother the only remaining members of his family. To return to Pau and to spend the remainder of his days with them looked to him like the boundary of his horizon. He seems to have been quite unconscious of the great rôles which he was destined to play or of his capacity to play them. Suddenly the prospect widened. A call of duty reached him which was to open a path to fortune, rank and fame.

¹ Hans Kloeber, 68.

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST MEETING WITH NAPOLEON BONAPARTE— THE ARMY OF ITALY

JANUARY—AUGUST 1797

WHILE Bernadotte had been raiding Austrian territory from the north and west, General Napoleon Bonaparte had been menacing it from the south in the first of his great Italian campaigns. This was the Italian campaign of 1796, which had been illuminated by the glories of Lodi, Castiglione and Arcola.

General Napoleon Bonaparte had received the command of the Army of Italy as a reward for having suppressed an *émeute* in Paris. He was destined to become Emperor of the French. But in 1797 he was a young general with no apparent prospect of ever wearing an imperial crown. We shall speak of him as Napoleon, although he was not yet generally known by any other name than that of General Bonaparte.

Napoleon was now contemplating the invasion of Austria, and was urging the Directorial Government to send him reinforcements commanded by first-rate generals. His demands were frank and forcible.

“Send me reinforcements,” he wrote, “but do not make game of me. I do not want reinforcements on paper. I want them here and now and under arms.” “As to generals of division,” he added, “I beg of you to send me none but distinguished officers, for our methods of warfare here are so different from all others that I cannot trust a division to any general until I have tried him in two or three engagements.”¹

¹ *Corr. de Nap.*, 1182, 1235, 1402.

The Directory replied :

“ The general of division Bernadotte, who is conducting to you the troops, will remain in Italy under your orders. He has already won from us proofs of our approval, and we hope that you will be able to report favourably of his services.”

Bernadotte left the Rhine for Italy in January 1797 with about 20,000 men. Their march covered 600 miles. The Alps were crossed in the depths of winter. Captain Français, in his journal, tells us that the ascent of one peak occupied six hours, the descent four hours ; and that on the summit the monks supplied the army with food and refreshment. No painter has represented Bernadotte crossing the mountain peaks, but we may quote Alison's word-picture :

“ These brave men crossed the Alps in the depths of winter. In ascending Mont Cenis a violent snowstorm arose. The guides recommended a halt, but the officers ordered the drums to beat, and they faced the tempest as they would have rushed on the enemy.” ¹

The Milanese were astonished, when the reinforcements passed through the Lombard city, to observe their fine bearing and their orderly behaviour, which presented a striking contrast to the comparatively wild ways and uncouth appearance of the soldiers of the Army of Italy. A Royalist spy has recorded the favourable impression which they created upon a witness who was disposed to be a hostile one :

“ The army of reinforcement,” he wrote, “ commanded by Bernadotte, is composed of an efficient corps of fine young troops. The soldiers march gaily, without any appearance of fatigue. This army crosses Piedmont without causing any trouble or making any depredation. Everything is done with a good discipline, which is very surprising.” ²

Napoleon himself never forgot the appearance of these

¹ Alison, vi 2.

² *Bonaparte et son temps*, par Jung, iii. 157.

troops, so different from his own. Montholon tells us that at St. Helena he said of them : " They were fine troops, in good order, and well disciplined." Their superior smartness was viewed with jealousy by the soldiers and by the other generals of the Army of Italy,¹ which prided itself upon being a " citizens' army." They nicknamed Bernadotte's troops " gentlemen " as a term of reproach.

These jealousies involved Bernadotte in personal quarrels one of which afterwards prejudicially affected his military career. On his arrival at Milan, he was informed that his troops had been quartered in an insanitary building. He immediately ordered Colonel Dupuy, the military commandant of the place, to billet the troops on the inhabitants. Dupuy replied sarcastically that the building " had been found good enough for the ' citizens ' of the Army of Italy, and that consequently the ' gentlemen ' of the army of the Rhine might very well put up with them." Bernadotte answered that " he could dispense with such observations, and he would recommend him to execute his orders promptly."

When Dupuy demurred, Bernadotte made it clear that he would insist upon being obeyed. " I would have you know, citizen general," said Colonel Dupuy, with a furious glance and a rattle of his sabre, " that I belong to the Army of Italy, and that I am not to receive orders from you, a general of the Army of the Rhine." Bernadotte immediately ordered his arrest, remarking : " The Republic has but one army, of which I am a general and you a colonel. I punish you under the penal code, which is the same for the officers of the Rhine and of Italy."

Colonel Dupuy was himself a fiery Gascon. He was also a noted duellist, and—what was more serious—a favourite of General Berthier, the chief of the staff of the Army of Italy, and next to Napoleon the most important man in the army.² When General Berthier heard of the incident, he took the first opportunity of censuring Bernadotte for having treated Dupuy with indignity.

¹ The other generals of the Army of Italy were Masséna, Serrurier, Augereau and Joubert.

² Sarrazin, *Phil.*, ii. 95-97.

"I have punished," said Bernadotte to Berthier, "one who was insubordinate. If you are minded to take his part, I am your man. You are, like me, a general of division. I am not inclined to quarrel, but I have a hearty wish to call those of my equals to account who, like you, think fit to assume a dictatorial air."¹

Berthier thereupon apologised, and bided his time. At a Review he turned to the officers near him and said, in Bernadotte's hearing, "I wonder how these fine 'gentlemen' will enjoy the cannons deranging their elegant dress." Bernadotte turned to him, and with a fierce look exclaimed, "Rest assured that there is not an individual in my division who is not ready to prove to you that he is as brave as yourself."

These high words were the beginning of an estrangement between Bernadotte and the chief of the staff which explains the statement of a military historian that Berthier always "hated" Bernadotte, and took care to "allot to him disagreeable and thankless tasks."²

While Bernadotte was nearing the end of his long march, Napoleon was negotiating a treaty with the Pope. Meanwhile he wrote several letters expressing a desire to make Bernadotte's acquaintance and to deserve his friendship. Bernadotte's state of mind was reflected in a letter to a comrade, in which he wrote: "I espouse the glory of the Army of Italy. I attach myself to that of its young general. I hope he may not be ungrateful."³

It was at Padua that Bernadotte and Napoleon first saw each other face to face and shook hands. Both men were ambitious and personally fearless. Otherwise, what a contrast! On one side a little Corsican, cold in manner, concise in diction, impatient of every external authority, politically cynical, already dreaming of personal autocracy, more proud than vain, thirsting for power and caring little for mere glory except as a means to that

¹ Sarrazin, *Phil.*, ii, 99, 100.

² Dunn-Pattison, *Napoleon's Marshals*, 80.

³ Letter to General Kellermann, *Revue des documents historiques*, Année VI, 86, 87.

end. Opposite to him and towering over him was a Gascon of Gascons, French to the core, gracious and eloquent, passionate yet prudent, enthusiastically grateful to free institutions, more vain than proud, loving glory and advancement more than power, hating the notion of personal autocracy, and having an instinctive respect for constituted authority.

The conversation between Napoleon and Bernadotte at their first meeting has not been recorded, but we know what they said of each other afterwards. "He received me very well," said Bernadotte, "but I saw in him a young man of twenty-five or twenty-six years of age, who assumes the airs of a man of fifty; and in my opinion that does not bode well for the Republic."¹ Napoleon, on the other hand, criticised Bernadotte's "Southern extravagance of style" and described him as possessing "a French head and a Roman heart"; and as "a republican grafted upon a French cavalier."¹

Some writers have drawn a hasty inference that an immediate antipathy or dissension sprang from this first meeting. There was no breach as yet. The two men obviously surprised and impressed each other. Bernadotte was surprised by the spectacle of a young commander-in-chief, his junior by six years, whose military genius, dominating personality, and political ambition were precociously mature. Napoleon was impressed and puzzled by a contrast of qualities in this newcomer from the Rhine. Among his other generals ardent Republicanism was not commonly coupled with courtly manners, nor Gascon turgidity with a Roman sense of strict discipline and duty. He was about to put Bernadotte to the test. The invasion of Austria was to open in a few days.

Napoleon threw the burden of the campaign upon the right wing, which he kept under his own command.² He gave the command of his own vanguard to Bernadotte. This was the post of honour, and was certain to give him opportunities of distinction. He was "the forward"

¹ Sarrans, i. 17; Pingaud, 9.

² Jomini, x. 23; *Victoires, Conquêtes*, viii. 81, 82.

of the whole team. His selection was due to the reputation which he had gained as a vanguard and rearguard leader on the Rhine and as "the Xenophon" of the retreat from Teining.

The advance began on 10th March. In the path of the French army lay a succession of rivers, of which the principal ones were the Piave, the Tagliamento, and the Isonzo. No attempt was made to oppose a passage of the Piave; and on the 16th Bernadotte's vanguard reached the banks of the Tagliamento, with the enemy in full view on the other side.

The Austrians were in a strong position; and, in order to attack them, the French had to cross a bridgeless but fordable river. When they came in sight of the enemy, Bernadotte addressed his division. "Soldiers," he exclaimed, "do not forget that you come from the Army of Sambre and Meuse, and that the eyes of the Army of Italy are fixed on you."¹ He thus seized upon the jealousies and rivalries of the moment for the purpose of stimulating the energies of his troops; and his appeal produced an electrical effect.

When the army came to the bank of the Tagliamento, something more than an eloquent address became necessary. The river was wide and cold. The first regiment hesitated to enter the water. Bernadotte shouted to them that the stream was fordable. A voice from the ranks replied, "We are not on horseback." The Gascon, without hesitation, leaped from his horse into the middle of the torrent, and cried, "Advance, forward!"² The troops followed with loud cries of "Long live our general!" An eye-witness describes Bernadotte as "crossing the numerous branches of the river under a very heavy fire."³ Before the enemy could collect themselves for an effective resistance, the French were drawn up on the left bank, and the Austrians had to retire. The passage of the Tagliamento had

¹ Sarrans, i. 17.

² Sarrazin, *Mém.*, 64; id., *Phil.*, 100, 101.

³ Lavalette, *Mémoires*, ii. 224.



THE CROSSING OF THE TAGLIAMENTO, 16TH MARCH, 1797.

After the picture by Duplessis-Bertaux.

been accomplished by the vanguard; and Captain Français tells us that Napoleon "congratulated us and the Gascon general of our division on our valour."¹

After a day's rest and a two days' march, Bernadotte's vanguard reached the river Isonzo, which was sentinelled by the fortress of Gradisca. On the morning of 19th March he occupied the hills overlooking the river and the fortress, and waited until General Bonaparte rode up, examined the country, and said: "There is the enemy; you must either take or blockade Gradisca and join me before night on yonder hill whither I am going with General Serrurier." He then spurred his horse and set off at full speed.

Bernadotte complained bitterly to his staff officer of the ambiguity of this order.

"I see it all," he said, "he is jealous of me, and wants to disgrace me. I have no resource left but to blow my brains out. I have no written orders to protect me in the discharge of my duty. If I blockade Gradisca I shall be blamed for not having stormed it. If I storm it, I shall be told I ought to have blockaded it."²

There was only one course for him to adopt. With the taunts of General Berthier still ringing in his ears, and with the knowledge of the jealousy of which his corps was the object, he could not afford to hesitate. He resolved to carry the place by a *coup de main*.

One of his officers, Colonel Lahure, tells us that his troops displayed reckless bravery, and that "the general remained exposed to a murderous fire for three hours."³ In an *ultimatum* he threatened to scale the walls. "It was bravado," writes General Lahure, "as we had no scaling-ladders." When the ammunition of the garrison began to fail, the Governor proposed to surrender on the terms that "the garrison will pass out to-morrow morning at five a.m.," to which Bernadotte

¹ *Capitaine Français, Journal de*, 152.

² Sarrazin, *Phil.*, ii. 101; id., *Confessions de Bonaparte*, App. 245, 246.

³ Lahure, 122, 123.

replied : “ The garrison will pass out in a quarter of an hour.”¹

Leaving his officers to carry out the capitulation, Bernadotte galloped off to the heights where Bonaparte and his staff were to be found, and reported the result. Napoleon received him coldly. While the Gascon general dismounted and poured forth his graphic description of the day's proceedings, the little Corsican stood opposite him with arms crossed, with knitted brow, and with pressed lips. He replied that Bernadotte had acted imprudently ; that he ought not to have lost a single man, and that it would have been quite sufficient to blockade the place and wait until General Serrurier came to his support.²

In his despatch to the Government Bonaparte did justice to the courage of the attacking troops, and added that “ General Bernadotte and his generals braved every danger ” ; and at St. Helena he acknowledged to Montholon that Bernadotte's impetuosity at Gradisca was not blamable. “ His excess of ardour,” he said, “ was justified by the eagerness of the troops of the Army of Sambre and Meuse to distinguish themselves, and by their noble emulation to vie with the troops of the Army of Italy.”³

The surrender of Gradisca allowed the French to advance on Vienna without meeting any serious resistance. When they reached the Styrian town of Leoben, about eighty miles from Vienna, an armistice was concluded to which the name of “ the Peace of Leoben ” was given ; and negotiations were opened between France and Austria which were destined to drag on for about six months.

Thus ended the Italian campaign of 1797. Its honours rested with Bernadotte. The crossing of the Tagliamento and the capture of Gradisca were attributed to his personal leadership and gallantry. His speech at the

¹ *Mémoires du Général Lahure*, 122, 123 ; Desjardins, *Campagnes en Italie*, v. 197 ; *Le Moniteur*, 31st March, 1797.

² Sarrazin, *Mém.*, 65 ; id., *Confessions de Bonaparte*, App. 245-248

³ *Corr. de Nap.*, 1600 ; Montholon, iv. 82.



Duplessis - Bertaux del.

An 10 de la Rep.

Duplessis-Bertaux exp. sculp.

BERNADOTTE, CONSEILLER D'ÉTAT, ET GÉNÉRAL DE L'ARMÉE DE L'OUEST.

THE STORMING OF GRADISCA BY BERNADOTTE, 19TH MARCH, 1797.

After the picture by Duplessis-Bertaux.

Painted afterwards in 1802, when Bernadotte was Counsellor of State and Commander of the Army of the West.

Tagliamento passed into popular literature. In the National Assembly a violent scene was quelled by a deputy who paraphrased it by exclaiming: "Remember that the Royalists have their eyes on you and that they will take advantage of your divisions."¹

Bernadotte received from the Directory the following complimentary letter:

"The brave divisions which you have led have signalised their junction with the Army of Italy, Citizen General, by their success. You in particular have proved, Citizen General, that you have made yourself familiar with this new theatre of war, and with the wise manœuvres which it demands. The Arch-Duke Charles must have recognised at Gradisca him whose daring and skill he so often experienced in Germany."²

The suspension of hostilities was followed by a revival of the jealousy with which Bernadotte's troops were regarded by the old troops of the Army of Italy. The fires which had smouldered during the campaign burst into flames at Laybach, where a fatal duel led to a series of affrays or "rixes," as they were called, between the "citizens" of General Masséna's and General Augereau's divisions and the "gentlemen" of General Bernadotte's division. Matters came to a head when General Augereau issued an order making anyone calling himself a "gentleman" incapable of serving in the army. Napoleon annulled this ridiculous order. But it was not until the camps were broken up and the troops became scattered that the "rixes"³ gradually died away.

The army became divided into two rival camps, in one of which Bernadotte was reviled, while in the other he was the object of hero-worship. For example, General Caffarelli, who adhered to the side of the "citizens," described him as—

¹ Barras, iii. 322; (Eng. Tr.) iii. 282.

² Sarrans, i. 18.

³ For further information about these "rixes" see Thiébault (Eng. Tr.), i, 325, 326; *Masséna*, par Abbadie, 115; Miot de Melito, *Mémoires* (Eng. Tr.), i. 120; De Reiset, *Souvenirs*, 62; Sarrazin, *Phil.*, ii. 108-111; id., *Mém.*, 68, 69.

“ very ardent, noted for his courage, possessing the powers of electrifying his officers and men ; but a despot in his division, believed to be a flatterer of those he had need of, a treacherous and dangerous enemy ; a looter like the rest.”¹

A striking contrast to Caffarelli's judgment is that of General Desaix, who was so universally admired that by common consent he earned the title of “ the Bayard of the army.” He was in Italy at this time, and in his journal he refers to Bernadotte as—

“ young, full of fire, of vigour, of fine enthusiasms, above all of character, very estimable. He makes enemies because he is supposed to be quarrelsome and hot-headed (*enragé*). His troops are the best in the whole army in bearing and appearance.”²

The opinion of his own officers is expressed by Colonel Lahure, who commanded one of his regiments. He tells us that General Bernadotte—

“ enjoyed a distinguished reputation for courage and *coup d'œil* on the field of battle. He was adored by his soldiers on account of this solicitude for their health and comfort, and the trouble which he took for their welfare.”³

The standards of the Army of Italy upon the subject of booty of war were very different from those of the Army of Sambre and Meuse. Napoleon used to reward his generals by assigning them towns for pillage. Bernadotte was allotted by Napoleon a substantial share of the booty of the rich quicksilver mines of Idria, and he accepted it. But he appears to have respected private property. The Curé of Adelsburg in Carniola has recorded the surprise of his parishioners when Bernadotte's corps passed through the district without exacting anything in money or goods.⁴

After the Armistice of Leoben the Venetian States were occupied by French troops and Bernadotte was appointed Governor of Friuli, with headquarters at

¹ Pingaud, 8.

² Desaix, *Journal de Voyage*, 70.

³ Lahure, 117.

⁴ Chélaré, *Les Armées françaises jugées par les habitants d'Autriche*, i. 13.

Udine, the provincial capital. Friuli was a post of special importance. Bonaparte, in appointing him, wrote, "The gorges of Carinthia will form part of your command, and you will be the rearguard of the army."¹

To Udine came a young officer of Masséna's army named Thiébault, afterwards a noted general. In his memoirs he gives the following account of his meeting with Bernadotte. It was written long afterwards when Bernadotte had ceased to be a Frenchman and had incurred much odium among French generals like Thiébault by the course which he was compelled to take as a Swede in altered circumstances :

"I went to pay my respects to General Bernadotte. He received me very well, and was kind enough to make me dine with him. After dinner, in a burst of confidence which touched me very much, and which I feel it an honour to remember, he had a private and confidential talk with me over all matters relating to the situation of France. As he reckoned up all the dangers which still threatened her political existence and her internal happiness, he was moved to tears. That moment, in which he showed the purity of his aims, the loftiness of his devotion, his unlikeness to so many other commanders with whom one could have reckoned only their own military glory, their own ambition, their own convenience, their own future, raised in me an admiration for him which I must confess later events may seem hardly to have justified."²

While Bernadotte was residing at Udine, exercising his troops, and governing Friuli with the help of a council of notables of the province, the Directory in Paris was experiencing the first of those constitutional crises the occurrence of which was foreshadowed in a former chapter.³ The Legislature and the Executive were at hopeless loggerheads. A military intervention offered the only possible solution of their differences, and Bernadotte was about to receive his political baptism.

¹ *Corr. de Nap.*, 1781, 1818. ² Thiébault (Eng. Tr.), i, 325, 326.

³ P. 28, *ante*.

CHAPTER VI

BERNADOTTE'S FIRST PLUNGE INTO POLITICS—THE “ COUP D'ÉTAT ” OF FRUCTIDOR

AUGUST—SEPTEMBER 1797

HITHERTO Bernadotte's career had been a strictly military one. Circumstances now arose which thrust him into politics.

The Executive Directory consisted of five directors who were the rulers of France. Power was in the hands of three of them who represented the revolutionary element in France and were nicknamed the Triumvirs. They were supported by a large body of Republicans who abhorred the idea of a Royalist restoration.

The Triumvirs, of whom Barras¹ was the most notable, formed a bare majority of the Directory. As a Director had to retire annually, and as a successor had to be elected by the Legislature, the bare majority was in danger of vanishing. The Opposition comprised the Royalists and other miscellaneous elements more or less allied with the Royalists. They predominated in the Legislature, as had been proved by the recent election of their leader, General Pichegru, to be President of the Council of 500, which was the popular chamber.

Under these circumstances the Revolutionary Government hung by a single and a slender thread ; and Barras looked for a general who would be willing to save them by a military *coup d'état*. The two stars in the military firmament were General Hoche and General Napoleon Bonaparte. Hoche shrank from the task ; and Napoleon Bonaparte seized the opportunity. He had already made up his mind to make himself the absolute ruler of France. A military *coup d'état* was the very thing to

¹ See p. 28, *ante*.

suit his plans, because it would furnish a precedent for a *coup* on his own account, of which he was already dreaming. Besides, the Royalists were his enemies and his critics. Their predominance might entail his dismissal and the ruin of all his hopes and designs.

While these plans were being hatched by Napoleon and Barras, a Royalist spy, the Count d'Antraigues, fell into the hands of Bernadotte, who sent him as a prisoner to Napoleon's headquarters.¹ Napoleon discovered, among his papers, a highly incriminating document from which it appeared that General Pichegru, the leader of the opposition party, had bargained with the exiled Royalist family for the restoration of the Bourbons. Pichegru was to receive as his reward a million francs, an historic castle, a house in Paris, a pension for his wife, and an annuity for himself and his descendants. Napoleon forwarded the document to Barras, who held it as a card to be played at the right moment. Meanwhile Bernadotte continued in ignorance of all that was going on.

In order to strengthen Barras's hands and to prepare the ground for the approaching *coup*, Napoleon ordered his five divisional generals to draw up proclamations in the form of addresses from their respective armies denouncing the opposition as a pack of conspirators, and inviting the Government to suppress them. Napoleon proposed to forward these addresses to the Directory to be published in the press so as to inflame public opinion.

The other four generals² promptly complied with Napoleon's order. The tone of their addresses may be judged from a passage from General Augereau's :

"O conspirators," it ran, "tremble. There is only one step from the Adige and the Rhine to the Seine. Your iniquities are numbered, and their recompense is to be found at the points of our bayonets."³

Bernadotte took an independent line. He separated

¹ *Un agent secret sous la Révolution, le Comte d'Antraigues*, par Pingaud.

² Masséna, Serrurier, Joubert and Augereau.

³ *Le Moniteur*, 12th August (25th Thermidor), 1797.

himself from the others and disputed the commander-in-chief's right to give him any orders on the subject. When Napoleon pointed out that his refusal to send an address might be misconstrued, Bernadotte agreed to send one. But he doubly dissociated himself from the other generals by sending his address direct to the Government instead of through Napoleon, and by making his offer of military support conditional upon a conspiracy being proved to exist. The following was his address :

“ TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORY.

“ Rumours of counter-revolution are heard on all sides, to which the men whom I command refuse to give the slightest credence ; but, if they turn out to be true, if conspirators have planned to lay a sacrilegious hand on the Government which is the safeguard of the laws and the sentinel of the people, then be assured that there still exist the arms which have served the cause of national independence, and the chiefs who have led the phalanxes of the Republic. With such supports as these you have only to express the wish in order that the enemies of the State and of liberty may disappear.

“ J. B. BERNADOTTE.”¹

The comparatively moderate character of Bernadotte's address has been noticed by the historians, one of whom remarks that Bernadotte had “ more vision, more independence, and a more elevated character ” than Augereau, while another asks the significant question, “ Was it the subconscious instinct of a future king ? ”²

The difference between the tone of Bernadotte's address and that of the other generals did not escape notice in Paris, where a Royalist journal, *Le Grondeur*, went so far as to claim him as a sympathiser. Bernadotte repudiated the suggestion in a vigorous letter which deserves to be quoted because it was a characteristically Gascon effusion, and also because it was copied into the

¹ *Le Moniteur*, 12th Aug. (25th Therm.), 1797.

² Barante, ii. 341 ; Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution Française*, v. 213.

London *Morning Chronicle*. It was Bernadotte's first introduction to the English public.

"I desire, sir," he wrote, "that you will honour me with perpetual oblivion ; my opinion and yours do not accord. A Republican, both by principle and conviction, I will, to the moment of my death, oppose all Royalists and enemies to the Directory. If moderation has ever been the rule of my conduct, it is because a life almost entirely dedicated to military labours has compelled me to submit to the duties of my station ; but, whenever the enemies of my Government and of the Republic are to be opposed, I shall place myself in the front rank of the defenders of the Government and the Republic, and shall call to my assistance those brave men who have so often heard my voice in the field of glory.

"BERNADOTTE."¹

This incident did not cause an immediate breach between Napoleon and Bernadotte ; but Napoleon began to realise that there was one general in his army who had a mind and a will of his own and might have to be counted with.

On the eve of the approaching *coup d'état* Napoleon sent Generals Augereau and Bernadotte to Paris. Ostensibly Augereau was sent to attend to private business ; and Bernadotte was made the bearer to the Government of captured flags. Augereau's real mission was to carry out the projected *coup* ; and the Directory, immediately on his arrival, equipped him for that purpose by appointing him Military Governor of Paris.

The historians are not agreed as to Napoleon's motive in sending Bernadotte. Was it to assist Augereau in the *coup* ? Barras thought so. Or was it to compromise him ? Or was it to have an independent correspondent in Paris at this moment ? He had sent his aide-de-camp Lavalette, who was in touch with the Royalists. In this way he had a correspondent in every camp.² Perhaps Napoleon had all these objects in view.

¹ *Morning Chronicle*, 6th September, 1797.

² Cf. Jung, iii. 215 ; Sarrazin, *Phil.*, ii. 117 ; Ségur, i. 224 ; Pingaud, 14.

Before the end of August Bernadotte arrived in Paris. Napoleon had announced his mission to the Government in a highly laudatory letter referring to the reputation which he had made on the Rhine, and to the achievements of his division in Italy.

“On every occasion,” wrote Napoleon, “they have overthrown whatever was opposed to them. At the passage of the Tagliamento and at the capture of Gradisca they have shown that courage and that zeal for military glory which distinguish the armies of the Republic. You see in General Bernadotte one of the foremost friends of the Republic, incapable alike by his principles and by his character of sacrificing the cause of liberty or the obligations of honour.”¹

Bernadotte was received in solemn audience by Barras and the other Directors, who were seated on their Republican thrones arrayed in their robes of office. Bernadotte in his general's uniform appeared before them and in presenting his flags delivered a speech which, according to a letter of Augereau's to Napoleon, “evoked frequent applause in the hall.”² Barras himself says in his Memoirs that “Bernadotte presented the banners with the modesty and unassuming bearing ever characteristic of him throughout his life.”³ Although his speech was somewhat florid and rhetorical, a contemporary writer of moderate views praised it in the following terms :

“General Bernadotte . . . showed himself worthy of the reputation which he enjoys. He has dared to risk dismissal because he has expressed his preference for peace at home and abroad, and has actually gone so far as to say that he only promises a constitutional obedience.”⁴

The following is the material part of his address :

“Complete the great work of Peace. Humanity appeals to you that the torrents of blood may cease to

¹ *Corr. de Nap.*, 2083.

² *Corr. inédite de Nap.* (Paris, 1819–1820), iv. 123.

³ Barras, iii. 6.

⁴ *French Revolutionary Tracts, British Museum*, 117 (18th Fructidor, An. V.).



GENERAL MASSENA.

“The spoiled child of Victory.”

Who became a Marshal of France, Duke of Rivoli,
and Prince of Essling.

After the portrait by Charpentier.



GENERAL AUGEREAU.

“The ‘sword’ of the 18th Fructidor.”

Who became a Marshal of France and Duke of Castiglione.
After the portrait by Hilaire Le Dru.

flow. But if, counting on our internal divisions, and still more on their understanding with the deserters from the cause of liberty, if, I say, our enemies form exaggerated demands, we shall take up our arms again, and march to battle with all the dread panoply of war, putting our trust in the justice of our cause, and preceded by the auguries of victory.”¹

In his reply the President of the Directory referred to Bernadotte as one “whose name is equally famous on the banks of the Rhine and of the Tagliamento.” Barras, who evidently was puzzled at the comparative sobriety of Bernadotte’s republicanism, tells us that he took pleasure in compromising the “cautious Gascon” by publicly embracing him and inviting him to dinner, and that he “enjoyed a laugh at seeing how impossible it was for him to decline the invitation.”² We shall find that Barras never quite understood Bernadotte until it was too late.

Barras sent for Bernadotte and offered him the opportunity of co-operating with Augereau in carrying out the approaching *coup*. But Bernadotte rejected this unconstitutional proposal, at the same time declaring his inflexible loyalty to the Government. Barras, in his cynical way, describes the incident as follows :

“I had thought of associating with Augereau General Bernadotte, whom Bonaparte had sent to Paris with that object in view ; but, having sounded Bernadotte several times during his repeated visits to me, I had been unable to obtain anything from him except vain protestations of a boundless devotion that would stop at nothing.”³

A few days afterwards⁴ General Augereau surrounded the Legislative Chambers with 12,000 troops, and arrested the Opposition leaders and deputies, fifty of whom, including General Pichegru, were deported to distant colonies. This was the *coup d'état* of the 18th Fructidor.

Having purged the Legislature by deporting the

¹ *Le Moniteur*, 30th August, 1797.

² Barras, iii. 6.

³ *Id.*, iii. 16 ; (Eng. Tr.) iii. 20.

⁴ 3rd September, 1797 (18th Fructidor, Année V, according to the Revolutionary Calendar).

leaders of the Opposition, the Directory next proposed to suppress the Royalist reaction, which was particularly strong in the South of France. Barras sent for Bernadotte and offered him the post of commander-in-chief of the Army of the South, which comprised four military divisions. This was to offer him a position of the same rank as Napoleon's. He was virtually to be military Governor of the South of France.

The Directory, assuming that Bernadotte would eagerly accept promotion to such a desirable command, actually signed and published his appointment. They went so far as to fill up his post in the Army of Italy, which afterwards had to be restored to him.¹

Bernadotte, however, refused the southern command. He considered that his *métier* was active service in the field. The task of coping with a civil war was repugnant to him, and he felt unequal to it. Barras was astonished when he received the following letter :

“ Citizen Director, you have requested me to think over the command with which the Directory desire to entrust me. I have accordingly again searched my conscience (*je me suis de nouveau interrogé,*) and have carefully considered the duties which it would involve and the means necessary for fulfilment. However painful it may be to me to have to acknowledge my inability to bear such a burden, I owe it to you to make a frank avowal, because I should be very much to blame if I had the rash ambition to dare to accept an employment requiring profound knowledge, close study of human nature, and a character at once firm and conciliatory. My honour, the voice of my conscience (*Mon honneur, le cri de ma conscience,*) and my desire to be useful to my country, bid me refuse the offer. Do not insist upon converting a good soldier into a bad commander-in-chief. . . . With compliments and respect,

“ BERNADOTTE.

“ P.S.—If it were necessary to subdue a faction I should consult nothing but my courage and my ardent

¹ A. Dry, ii. 348 ; *Corr. de Nap.*, 2282, 2296 ; *La Clef du Cabinet*, 26th and 27th September, 1797.

republicanism ; but, at a time when the crisis is passed, I owe to the Government the result of a frank estimate of my capacities for such duties as are proposed to me.”¹

Bernadotte remained in Paris for a month after the *coup d'état* of Fructidor, and was the recipient of other marks of approval, both from the Government and the public. The Directors sent to him, through the Minister of War, four valuable horses. They also presented him with two pistols of Versailles make, and a sword of honour, which he retained and prized to the end of his life.² A deputation of veteran national volunteers waited upon him in order to express their pleasure at seeing him in Paris and their appreciation of his military achievements. With Generals Augereau, Hedouville and Tilley, he acted as a pall-bearer at the funeral of General Hoche, who had been Napoleon's rival in military prestige. Hoche's pacification of La Vendée and something about him that was romantic and elevated had struck the public imagination. His loss was regarded as a national one.³

It was now that Bernadotte first mixed in the social life of the capital. The impression which he made in society is recorded in the memoirs of a lady⁴ who met him at this period and described him as “tall, with black hair and teeth of dazzling white. He was a man whom one could not meet in a salon without remarking him and inquiring his name.”

It was now that he met Madame de Staël,⁵ the high-priestess of the Constitutional Republicans, a brilliant woman, with a European reputation. Her political opinions were in accord with his ; and he found in her witty conversation the expression of his own sentiments. Their acquaintance ripened into a gallant friendship which never wavered. At her house he made the

¹ Letter which was in the Author's possession. ² See p. 335, *post*.

³ Dry, ii. 345 ; *La Clef du Cabinet*, 10th September, 1797.

⁴ Madame de Chastenay, i. 367.

⁵ Madame de Staël was daughter of Necker, Louis XVI's famous Minister, wife of the Swedish Minister in Paris, and authoress of many successful books, of which *Corinne* was the best known.

acquaintance of Benjamin Constant, and the rest of a brilliant group who were known as the "Constitutional Circle," and were regarded as a counterpoise to the "Clichian Circle," which was the social rendezvous of Royalism.

At Paris Bernadotte found his old friend, General Kléber, at whose house he met General Lefèbvre and others who had been his comrades on the Rhine. The command-in-chief of the Armies of the Rhine now became vacant by the dismissal of General Moreau. Moreau was suspected of complicity with the Royalists, who blamed Napoleon for his dismissal. We learn from a letter of Kléber's that Bernadotte was offered the command-in-chief of the Armies of the Rhine, and that he "had the wisdom and the modesty to refuse."¹ The Rhine had ceased to be a grand theatre of war, and no longer had any attraction for an ambitious soldier.

At this period Bernadotte's ambition, like Napoleon's, was oriented towards the East. Napoleon was captivated by the idea of conquering Egypt. Bernadotte now began to dream of the conquest of India, and broached the subject to the Government. Barras puts the incident in his own cynical way :

"One who has held high positions," writes Barras, "and has seen ambitious men come to him in order to prefer their requests, knows that their ordinary formula is to begin by saying that they have no ambition. Sometimes they even submit distant projects, which they seek to represent as born of a disgust for grandeur and for the whole human race. And yet this assumed disgust consists in a desire to obtain a distant command—in other words, to be the first somewhere, in consequence of the chagrin they feel at their inability to be first at home. So it was with Bernadotte, who, before leaving Paris to rejoin the Army of Italy, suggests an expedition to India to us. Of course the scheme had doubtless no other object than the welfare of France, but also, of course, no one better than the author of the scheme can obtain this national benefit."²

¹ Chuquet, *Quatre généraux de la Révolution*, 212, 213.

² Barras, iii. 37 ; (Eng. Tr.) iii. 48, 49.

The Directory now began to entertain the idea of appointing Bernadotte Minister of War ; but they appear to have laid it aside on account of the reputation which he had made for moderation in civil affairs. He had made it evident that he was not prepared to lend his sword to any unconstitutional proceeding.

The time was arriving for Bernadotte's return to Italy. He had written several letters to Napoleon. They were the feverish effusions of a young general passing through his first political experience. Napoleon must have been amused at the crude surmises and exuberant republicanism of this as yet unsophisticated soldier. Little dreaming that Napoleon himself was the arch-organiser of the *coup d'état* of Fructidor and was planning another *coup* of his own, Bernadotte wrote deprecating "any violent and ill-directed movement," because it "must necessarily be fatal to liberty," and adding that, "the abuses of power always increase when the will of an individual is substituted for the law of the land."¹

A passage in one of these letters was strangely prophetic. Writing about the venomous hostility of the Royalists to the Republican Army, he remarks : "How little do they think that we could conquer Europe, if you chose to form the project." To Napoleon himself he was entirely friendly. He closed one of his letters in the following terms :

"Farewell, my general ; enjoy the delights of life. Do not poison your existence with melancholy thoughts. My friendship for you is unchangeable."¹

After an eventful six weeks, in the course of which he had mingled for the first time in the social and political life of the capital, had declined a share in the *coup d'état* of Fructidor and had refused two commands-in-chief, Bernadotte started at the beginning of October to rejoin his division in Italy and to resume his duties as Governor of Friuli.

¹ *Corr. inédite de Nap.*, vi. 133, 134.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST RIFT WITH NAPOLEON

(OCTOBER—DECEMBER 1797)

THERE is undeniable evidence that Napoleon became uneasy at the favourable impression which Bernadotte had created during his mission, and at the continuance of his stay in the capital. We know from the memoirs of his A.D.C., Lavalette, that Napoleon was particularly disturbed by the rumour that the Directory contemplated making Bernadotte Minister of War.¹ Napoleon must have pressed the Government for Bernadotte's recall, for we find the President of the Directory writing to him in October: "You complain of the absence of General Bernadotte. He must have already reached you," and Barras's secretary, writing on the next day: "You complain of Bernadotte! He is already with you."²

Napoleon was disturbed at the spectacle of a general who had gained military distinction winning the notice and the ear of the Executive Government, and being marked out by public opinion as a probable aspirant to high ministerial office. There were very few military men who had any political influence or any political ambition. Hoche was dead; Pichegru had been deported to a colony; Moreau was compromised by his supposed relations with the Royalists; Berthier, Kléber, Masséna, Augereau and the rest were mere soldiers without political prospects or capacity. Napoleon began to apprehend that Bernadotte might become a rival or an obstacle in his path.

On the day that Bernadotte returned to Udine Napoleon

¹ Lavalette, 142.

² *Corr. inédite de Nap.*, iv. 246; Bourrienne, i. 306, 307.

came from his headquarters at the Castle of Passariano to see him. As he was in the middle of the peace negotiations of Campo Formio, he questioned Bernadotte about the views of the Directory on that subject.

Bernadotte informed Napoleon that the Directory wished to find an excuse for recommencing war ; but, when pressed for his own advice, he expressed a strong opinion in favour of peace. He pointed out that the Directors, conscious of their own weakness, considered that the best means of preserving their existence was to keep France in a perpetual state of peril and uncertainty, but that the Republic would gain by a peace, one of the conditions of which would be its recognition by the Austrian Empire.

Napoleon asked him what was thought of himself, and Bernadotte replied with surprising frankness :

“ The Directory is annoyed at the want of respect which you show them ; the Army of Sambre and Meuse is opposed to you ; the Army of the Rhine believes you to be the cause of Moreau’s disgrace ; the Royalists know that the events of the *coup d’état* of Fructidor have put a stop to their plans, and that one of the motives of that *coup d’état* was the desire to save you from the charges which they wished to bring against you. The republicans suspect you, and have become cool even about your fame. But the people of Paris are enthusiastic about you, and you are to-day the idol of that populace. Nevertheless, for your own sake I advise you to make peace. If you have reverses, you cannot count on protection or help from any political party. Nearly all of them would rejoice at your defeat.”¹

Napoleon invited Bernadotte to dinner at the castle of Passariano, requesting him to come early. Bernadotte took the word “early” too literally, and presented himself with his staff officer, General Sarrazin, at three o’clock in the afternoon instead of five, which was the dinner-hour. Duroc, the aide-de-camp on duty, asked him to wait, as Napoleon was engaged writing his letters

¹ Sarrazin, *Phil.*, ii. 119, 120 ; Sarrans, i. 20.

for the post. "Tell the commander-in-chief," Bernadotte said, "that it does not suit General Bernadotte to wait in the ante-room. Even the Directory in Paris never subjected him to such a mortification."¹

Napoleon, who was within hearing, came forward, and proposed a walk in the garden. He explained that, as soon as he had heard Bernadotte's voice, he had come forward to welcome "the right hand of his army." General Sarrazin adds that, while Bonaparte received Bernadotte with "an angelic sweetness" he bit his lip with anger and annoyance and took an ample revenge in the conversation which ensued.

Napoleon and Bernadotte then strolled in the garden of Passariano. General Sarrazin, who accompanied them, has recorded their conversation. They discussed the merits of other generals. In fact, the conversation consisted of military "shop"; and Sarrazin remarked that Napoleon seemed to take a malignant pleasure in disparaging Bernadotte's friends, and in markedly avoiding any reference or compliment to Bernadotte himself.¹

"*Napoleon.* You took part in Hoche's funeral. What is the opinion entertained of him in Paris?

"*Bernadotte.* A very high opinion. I heard him described as being in war what Mirabeau was in politics.

"*Napoleon.* Hoche's merits have been exaggerated. He lacked judgment and personality.

"*Bernadotte.* I confess I was wounded at the comparative oblivion to which the memory of my brave friend and comrade Marceau has been relegated.

"*Napoleon.* Marceau! a mere vanguard-leader who never had any larger experience. What is said of Augereau's appointment to the command-in-chief on the Rhine?

"*Bernadotte.* I heard it criticised. He has the reputation of being rough and illiterate.

"*Napoleon.* He is not an academician, a coxcomb or a monk. But such characters are little suited to a field of battle or a bivouac.

¹ Sarrazin, *Phil.*, ii. 119-131; id., *La Guerre de la Restauration*, Préface, vii.

“ *Bernadotte*. True ; but Kléber and Bournonville had better claims to the post.

“ *Napoleon*. No—Kléber is too insubordinate to the civil government. Bournonville is a mere carpet knight.

“ *Bernadotte*. Yet they gained victories in the campaign on the Rhine.

“ *Napoleon*. The victories on the Rhine were largely due to the mistakes of the Austrians.

“ *Bernadotte*. I have heard it said that the victories in Italy have been unduly magnified. I admit that the generals of that army are fine soldiers.

“ *Napoleon*. Masséna is a good general of a vanguard, but he requires to be kept under observation. Serrurier is a capable commander of a reserve. The only one who has the requisite talent for a command-in-chief is Joubert.”

Bonaparte, who had mentioned all the principal generals of the army of Italy except Bernadotte himself, then proceeded to enumerate the qualities which ought to be united in a successful commander-in-chief and to discuss the relative merits and achievements of Alexander, Cæsar, Hannibal and all the greatest captains of all ages. Every now and then he was malicious enough to ask Bernadotte questions which he well knew the untutored Gascon was unable to answer, such as the formation of the Grecian phalanx, and the organisation of the Roman legion.

Bernadotte, who was comparatively unversed in classical history, is described by the eye-witness as much relieved at the sound of that “tocsin of the soul” the dinner-bell. At dinner one of the guests was General Marfeldt, the Austrian plenipotentiary, who had contracted a friendship with Bernadotte at Leoben. Seeing that his friend was out of his depth, he turned the conversation to French infantry manœuvres. This gave Bernadotte his chance, and Napoleon himself had to yield to him when he got upon ground on which he was thoroughly at home.

After dinner Bernadotte remarked to his staff officer that Bonaparte, to be so well-informed at his age, must

have extraordinary aptitude for learning. He added that, if he (Bernadotte) were not too old he would not hesitate to give himself up to study. The staff officer replied that there was always time enough to learn, that Bernadotte would be able to master the history and the theory of war all the more easily from his thorough knowledge of its practical side.¹

A new era in Bernadotte's life commenced from this moment. He now began to pass his spare time in mastering the best works on classical and political history, as well as upon military science, and in discussing them with his officers. The dinner with Napoleon at Passariano became the starting-point of a severe and resolute course of self-education. Contact with Napoleon seems to have had an electric quality. It was so in the case of Marshal Lannes, of whom Napoleon said, "I found him a pigmy, and I made him a giant."²

At the Castle of Passariano Bernadotte made the acquaintance of Madame Bonaparte—the future Empress Josephine—under whose first husband, General Beauharnais, he had served on the Rhine in 1793.³ In the meantime, she had played the part of a "merry widow" in the society of the Directory, and particularly in the salon of Director Barras. She seized an opportunity of heartily concurring with Bernadotte's wishes for the conclusion of peace. She added, in her gracious, caressing way, "Thanks to the good reinforcements which you brought to us from Germany, everything points to a treaty which will be glorious in France."

One of the consequences of the Peace of Campo Formio was a change in the government of the provinces in Northern Italy, and a reorganisation of the Army of Italy on a new basis. As part of this reshuffling of troops and military posts, Bernadotte was relieved of his Governorship of Friuli, his army was broken up, and his headquarters were transferred to Treviso, where he was to await further orders.

¹ Sarrazin, *Phil.*, ii. 119-131 ; 153-176.

² Las Cases, *Journal de*, ii. 43.

³ See p. 17, *ante*.

The breaking up of his army drew vehement protests from Bernadotte and annoyed him to a degree which would be unintelligible without bearing in mind the special ties which bound him to his officers and his men. They had served together since the battle of Fleurus, in Belgium and on the Rhine as part of the army of Sambre and Meuse, and in Italy as part of Napoleon's army. Their spirit of clanship had been strengthened by the jealousy of which they had been the object in Italy.

The warm-hearted enthusiasm of his southern nature had been given to the officers and men who had fought under him at Teining, the Tagliamento, Gradisca and in many other engagements. He made the break-up of his division a personal grievance, and he bitterly reproached Napoleon with having promised him the contrary and adding, "You know, my general, that my division is my military family, and I am attached to it."

Bonaparte could not understand such sentiments. To him, more than to most commanders, armies, divisions, regiments and soldiers were mere counters in a great game of war, policy and ambition. To General Sarrazin, Bernadotte's staff officer, he said :

"Your Bernadotte is a very weak person. I cannot do better than compare him to an old corporal, who complains lustily when a man is taken from his file. When you see him again, tell him my only answer is that I never dined out of the wooden bowl."¹

This phrase was a sneering allusion to Bernadotte's long service "in the ranks." The Executive Directory were puzzled at Bernadotte's protests against the breaking up of his army, and Barras described his complaints as the grumblings of a "peevish child." Nevertheless Barras considered the "peevish child" of sufficient importance to be worth humouring, and the Government marked him out for advancement in the near future.

Bernadotte's farewell address to his troops was like a father's letter to his children. Here is a passage from

¹ Sarrazin, *Confessions de Bonaparte*, App. 256.

it. It contains that touch of idealism which lifted Bernadotte above the military crowd.

“Continue to maintain your reputation by that discipline which, I assure you, was not too exacting. Be generous and good to the inhabitants and make their burden as light as possible. Always preserve the happy recollection of your conquests on the Rhine and of your triumphs in Italy. Lift your souls to lofty ideals. Remember that most of your generals have risen from your ranks. Keep unsullied the laurels which crown your heads. You can preserve your glory; it would be difficult to increase it. I have not lost hope of having you with me again. The day when you are once more under my command will be one of the brightest and happiest of my life.

“BERNADOTTE.”¹

The laudatory address which he received from the Council of the Province of Friuli was one of the first of many similar documents which came to him, during his career, from the inhabitants of conquered territory :

“The new sphere of glory which has been offered to you cannot console us for the prospects of losing you. May the genius of France accompany and guard you. We shall hear of your achievements with the pride with which we have been inspired by the honour of having been confided to your Rule. It is among us and in our territory that, by your beneficent care for our prosperity, you have acquired a reputation, which is all the more precious, because it belongs to you alone. Your officers and soldiers cannot aspire to share it, as they can to share your military glory. The recollection of your conduct will remain for ever graven upon our hearts.”¹

After his transference to Treviso and his separation from his old comrades Bernadotte became utterly restless and discontented. He wrote to the Directory asking for a distant command—mentioning the Indies, the island

¹ Lahure, 129.



After the portrait by Bonneville.



After the portrait by Levachez.¹



After the portrait by Guérin.



After the portrait by Fauchery.

FOUR PORTRAITS OF GENERAL BERNADOTTE.

¹ The portrait by Levachez is of the period of the Consulate.

of Mauritius, or the Ionian Islands. If they will not give me a distant command, let them give me my retirement." He informed Napoleon of this step and recommended his aides-de-camp, Captains Maurin and Villate, for employment in a letter which revealed his ill-humour and has been characterised as "insolent."

"They are good subjects," he wrote, "and will serve the Republic with the same zeal and ardour which have always characterised the troops from the Rhine. They will, like me, bow to superior talents, but never to mere audacity. Although I have grounds for complaint against you, I shall part from you without ceasing to have for your talents my greatest esteem." ¹

This letter mirrors Bernadotte's mind towards Napoleon, whose pre-eminence as the first general of that age he acknowledged. But he resented his domineering ways and dictatorial aims.

The Directory replied offering him, in flattering terms, a choice of commands which included the Ionian Islands and the garrison of Paris. Napoleon, in conveying their offer, added a conciliatory message from himself:

"No one appreciates," he wrote, "more than I do the purity of your principles, the loyalty of your character and the military talents which you have developed while we have served together. You will do me an injustice if you doubt it for a moment. In all circumstances I shall count on your esteem and friendship." ²

Bernadotte chose the Ionian Islands which had been recently annexed to France by the Treaty of Campo Formio. Having written to the Directory accepting the post, he began to make his preparations for taking up his duties at Corfu.

Within a week of Bernadotte's acceptance of the command of the Ionian Islands, the Directors suddenly changed their minds, and resolved to appoint him commander-in-chief of the Army of Italy in succession

¹ Cf. Sarrans, i. 21.

² *Corr. de Nap.*, 2390.

to Napoleon. Their object was to put him forward as a counterpoise to Napoleon's growing predominance. Napoleon perceived their intention and set himself to defeat it. He was beginning to see in Bernadotte a possible rival. Meanwhile he wrote to him a letter the insincerity of which is transparent :

“ It appears,” he wrote, “ that the Government thinks it necessary for you to remain where you are, in order to command the Army of Italy. That post is of such enormous importance that I could not with a good grace oppose their wish. Believe me that in all circumstances I shall give you proof of the esteem with which you have inspired me.”¹

While he was writing these honeyed words, Napoleon, as we know from Barras's memoirs, was leaving no stone unturned to have Bernadotte's appointment as commander of the Army of Italy cancelled. In the first instance, he took the line of depreciating him as a general of division who had not had the experience necessary for a command-in-chief. Having failed to oust him by disparagement, he seized upon the declaration of peace with Austria as an opportunity of sending him as Ambassador to Vienna. He represented Bernadotte as being amiable, popular, polite in his manner, in short, an ideal diplomat. He pointed out what a triumph it would be for the Directory to impose upon the haughty Government of Austria a plebeian general as the Ambassador of the French Republic. By these persistent intrigues Napoleon succeeded in having the command of the Army of Italy taken away from Bernadotte and given to his own chief staff officer, General Berthier, and in having Bernadotte appointed Ambassador to Vienna.²

The Viennese Ambassadorship had been, in old France, the blue riband of the diplomatic service. It was now being revived after nearly ten years' ceaseless war during which diplomatic relations had been entirely suspended.

¹ *Corr. de Nap.*, 2400.

² Barras, iii. 150, 151 ; (Eng. Tr.), iii. 191, 192 ; *Vers Brumaire*, 91, 92.

It was during this decade that the Austrian Archduchess, Marie Antoinette, had perished by the guillotine in that Revolution which was personified in generals like Bernadotte. Bernadotte himself had taken part in four invasions of Austrian territory, and had twice come near the capital, once as far as Ratisbon from the German side, and once as far as Leoben from the Italian side.

The Directory carried out Bernadotte's appointment with a total disregard of all the rules of international courtesy. They did not consult the Austrian Government as to the sending or selection of the envoy, but hurled him insolently without an explanatory word into the *corps diplomatique* of the most aristocratic and anti-republican court in Europe. "It was the Revolution," wrote Frédéric Masson, "that made its entry into Vienna in the person of Bernadotte."¹

Bernadotte was in North Italy, far away from Paris, and was quite free from blame for the manner, or rather the unmannerliness, of his appointment. He was a diplomat *malgré lui*, who had neither sought nor desired the post. To the Directory he wrote: "The first quality of a soldier, which is obedience, forbids me to hesitate, but I fear I shall meet greater difficulties in diplomacy than any which I have had to overcome in my military career." The Government did their best to reconcile him to his new position, by publicly describing him as one who had shown himself "qualified for all the careers," and by fixing his salary at £5,000 of our money, with ample allowances.

His appointment as Ambassador necessitated a correspondence with the famous Talleyrand, who was the French Minister for Foreign Affairs.² Nobody knew better than Talleyrand what a hornets' nest of social and diplomatic difficulties awaited the Republican Ambassador in the conservative atmosphere of Vienna. Talleyrand was the most *rusé* diplomat of his age. His temperament was the antithesis of Bernadotte's. Phlegmatic,

¹ *Les Diplomates de la Révolution*, par Frédéric Masson, 153.

² *Id.*, 161, 162.

passionless, laconic, intolerant of zeal and enthusiasm, he was the opposite of the fiery Gascon, with his exalted ideals and his high-flown exuberance of style.

Talleyrand probably was highly puzzled and amused by receiving from the new Ambassador the following letter with its ingenuous confession of inexperience and its florid request for advice :

“ In accepting the important mission which the Government has just confided to me,” wrote Bernadotte to Talleyrand, “ I have consulted my capacity less than my desire to be useful to the Republic. The latter motive has elevated my soul and exalted my imagination. I have said to myself that, in a young Republic, the men who cherish the love of serving her should approach high office as they would approach death—neither desiring it nor fearing it. I confess, and I do so without a blush, that although the events of my life, which have so rapidly succeeded each other, have served to fortify the courage of my soul, that courage would now have abandoned me, and I should have shrunk from so delicate a task, if the hope of being aided by your counsel had not set my mind at ease. I place boundless reliance upon your willingness to advise me, because I believe that you have contributed to my appointment.”¹

A brisk difference of opinion ensued over the question of the Ambassador's suite. Bernadotte, whose experience hitherto had been exclusively military, was not prepared to merge the soldier in the diplomat. He asked that Generals Mireur and Sarrazin should be attached to his Embassy. Talleyrand objected, and the Government refused to sanction the employment of generals as diplomatic attachés. Bernadotte then insisted upon being accompanied by four military A.D.C.'s, Captains Maurin, Villatte, Gérard and Toussaint, all of them men of mark and promise. When Talleyrand raised objections Bernadotte appealed to the Government “ not to deprive me of the pleasure of the society of some comrades-in-arms, with whom I may converse about those glorious

¹ Masson, 161, 162 ; Dry, ii. 361.

epochs which have shed such lustre and éclat upon the people and the Government of France." Talleyrand had to yield and to content himself with adding to Bernadotte's household two young secretaries who were nominees of his own, and an aggressive Polish emigrant.

Thus the new Ambassador entered upon his diplomatic novitiate with a staff consisting of four young sabreurs, two youthful secretaries, and a Polish propagandist. The ship in which he was about to navigate the troubled waters of diplomacy was better equipped with swords and with sails than with ballast or steering-gear.

Less than five months had elapsed since Bernadotte had for the first time come into contact with politics and with the Governors of France.¹ During these twenty weeks quite a number of brilliant opportunities had been rejected or lost. He had been offered at least five military commands-in-chief: the Army of the South, the Army of the Rhine, the Garrison of Paris, the Ionian Islands, and the Army of Italy. In the political arena he had been invited to take a leading part in the *coup d'état* of Fructidor, and he had been marked out as a possible Minister of War. Now he had been temporarily shelved by being appointed Ambassador at Vienna. It looked as if Barbaroux's prophecy at Marseilles, seven years back, was becoming capable of fulfilment. "Monsieur l'Adjudant," said Barbaroux on that occasion, "you will go far; and I predict that, if circumstances are only favourable, you will have a glorious future."² There was one circumstance which was certain to have a far-reaching influence upon his career. The course of events was beginning to thrust him into opposition to Napoleon's aims and ambitions.

¹ See p. 52, *ante*.

² See p. 12, *ante*.

CHAPTER VIII¹

A GASCON AMBASSADOR

JANUARY—JUNE 1798

BERNADOTTE was at Milan, preparing to take up the command of the Army of Italy, when the news of his new appointment reached him. The change was distasteful to him; and he turned to it with reluctance and misgiving.

From Milan he travelled towards Vienna by very much the same route as he had pursued in the Italian campaign of the preceding year. The circumstances were very different. He was not called upon to plunge into a cold river or to storm a strong fortress. Nevertheless, the journey was not uneventful. Having no passport, he was turned back at the frontier. He announced his office and declared that, if he were not allowed to proceed, he would treat it as an act of war. The frontier officer had no information or evidence of his diplomatic status; but he did not dare to stop him.²

The frontier officer was not the only Austrian who received a shock at this unexpected event. Diplomats such as Metternich and Cobentzel were stunned at the news. Count Cobentzel, who had met Bernadotte at Leoben, reported to the Austrian Foreign Office that he was "a man of honour and good manners," but added in the haughty spirit of his caste that he was a *parvenu*.

¹ For this chapter use has been made of Frédéric Masson's *Les Diplomates de la Révolution* and A. Dry's *Soldats ambassadeurs sous le Directoire; Les Mémoires, etc., d'un Homme d'État*, v. 492 et seq.; *Vers Brumaire*, par Albert Espitalier; Albert Sorel's *L'Europe et la Révolution Française*, and of the newspapers of the day, e.g. *Le Moniteur*, *La Gazette de France*, and *La Clef du Cabinet*.

² Masson, 151-153.

who belonged to the bourgeois class, "of which the best are of no account." The Austrian Government protested to the Directory against the diplomatic irregularities which had marked the appointment of the new Ambassador, but took care to add that the Emperor, "in view of the reputation which General Bernadotte enjoyed of being a man of estimable qualities, had learnt with much satisfaction of his selection." Bernadotte was in Vienna before this despatch had reached the Directory.

The social and diplomatic worlds of Vienna were astonished when the French Ambassador reached the Austrian capital on the afternoon of Tuesday the 8th February, hardly a month after his appointment. It was fortunate that his credentials had not yet arrived. This gave him time to purchase horses, equipage and plate and to obtain a suitable residence. Several magnates of the capital, including the Metternichs, refused to let their town houses to the Ambassador, who finally succeeded in establishing himself in a former palace of the Prince of Lichtenstein situated in a much-frequented thoroughfare.

We find the Viennese newspapers recording the new Ambassador's public comings and goings, and describing his striking appearance, easy manners and simple uniform. He wore one ornament which struck the citizens of Vienna as ominous and provocative. This was the tricolour plume in his hat. It was the emblem of the Revolution and reminded the Viennese of ten years of suffering and bloodshed :

"Cette tache de ciel, cette tache de sang."¹

The Ambassador's first official ceremony was his presentation to the Emperor. With the assurance of a cadet of Gascony, he acted the part which, under the old regime, would have fallen to a scion of some noble house, and in confident tones, which rang out through the audience-chamber, he addressed the Emperor as follows :

¹ Rostand, *L'Aiglon*, Acte III, sc. 3.

“ In accepting this honourable and important mission I have yielded to the desire to contribute to a friendship and a just understanding between the Powers who, in critical times, have measured each other’s strength and have learnt the lesson of mutual respect. It will be my principal object to convince your Majesty that the Directory of the French Republic is sincerely attached to its friends, and that it gives unqualified support and protection to its allies. I shall be doubly happy if I can convince your Majesty of the sincerity of my wishes that your Majesty may enjoy peace and happiness.”

The Emperor replied :

“ I am pleased to have made peace with your Republic. It depends upon the Directory to maintain it. I have fought frankly, although my allies deserted me. You are a witness, because you came very near to this place. I have wished for peace. It exists, and I shall preserve it, because I love it, and humanity makes for it. As for yourself, you can do much. I wish you to enjoy yourself here.”¹

Francis I was the last of the titular Roman Emperors. He was a patient, dutiful, capable, industrious monarch—just thirty years of age. Little did he imagine that in less than fifteen years he would be addressing this republican general as his “ brother ” and welcoming him as his ally.² At this moment the recollection of the recent campaign in Germany and Italy must have been fresh in the memories of both of them. There was a personal touch in the Emperor’s remark, “ You are a witness, because you came very near to this place.”

The inherent difficulties of the Ambassador’s position were doubled by the insolent character of his instructions from the French Government. He was to procure the removal from office of Baron von Thugut, the Emperor’s Foreign Minister, with whom he was in daily official communication. He was to assume a defiant attitude against Russia and to take a high tone in his dealings with the Austrian Government. In certain

¹ Masson, 171 ; Dry, ii. 376.

² P. 283, *post*.



GENERAL BERNADOTTE, SOLDIER-AMBASSADOR

After the picture by Hilaire Le Dru.

events he was to threaten and, if necessary, even to declare war.

As regards etiquette, the Ambassador was to claim the prerogatives of the old monarchy of France. Yet he was to treat the Royalist *émigrés*, of whom there were many in Vienna, as outlaws and fugitives from French justice, and to protest against any recognition of the *ci-devant* monarchy. Above all, he was ordered to display the republican emblems in the Embassy, and he and his staff were to wear the republican colours wherever they went.¹

In carrying out these instructions Bernadotte paid scrupulous regard to the personal feelings of the Emperor, for whom he always expressed his respect and deference in polite terms. But the Foreign Minister, when he tackled political questions of a controversial kind, found himself drenched in torrents of Gascon invective. For example, when he put forward the necessity of conciliating the Czar of Russia, Bernadotte followed his Government's instructions by letting himself go in an outburst of indignant wrath.

"What matters," he exclaimed, "the mad fury of that tyrant of the north? The French Republic defies and despises his threats. The time will soon come when that tiger in human shape will himself be attacked in the heart of his dominions. All classes of his subjects are weary of his yoke. His extravagant schemes are known to the French people, and his race will soon be run."²

The Foreign Minister tried to take revenge on the Ambassador by spreading abroad the fact that he had risen from the ranks. Among the French *émigrés* in Vienna was M. de Béthisy, an ex-colonel of the Royal-la-Marine Regiment under whom Bernadotte had served as a sergeant. Baron von Thugut, with the object of humiliating the Ambassador, availed himself of an opportunity of saying to him, in the hearing of a court circle:

"We have in Vienna a former French officer, an

¹ Masson, 155, 185.

² Id., 180.

émigré, who tells everyone that he once knew you very well." "May I ask his name?" said Bernadotte. "M. de Béthisy," replied Thugut. "Yes," said the Ambassador, "I knew him very well. He was my colonel, and I had the honour of serving under him in the ranks of the Royal-la-Marine Regiment. I owe to the kindness and encouragement of that brave commander whatever qualities I possess. I regret that the obligations of my position do not permit me to receive him at the French Embassy; but please tell him that Bernadotte, his old soldier, preserves for him sentiments of respect and gratitude."

This incident was repeated everywhere, and created an excellent impression.¹

Next to the Emperor, the most notable Prince in Vienna was the Archduke Charles, the Austrian commander-in-chief, whom Bernadotte had met on the field of battle at Teining in 1796.² A day and hour were fixed for the reception of the Ambassador by the Prince, who had to postpone it on account of a sudden summons from the Emperor. Bernadotte's instructions rendered him quick to resent anything approaching to a slight on his office. He intimated that he withdrew his request for an audience and no longer wished to be received by His Imperial Highness!³

The Ambassador, in spite of his republican sensitiveness, appears personally to have made a favourable impression at Court and in society. His audience with the Empress is described by an annalist of court ceremonies as "a veritable success."

Bernadotte favoured art and music wherever he went. The French Embassy became the rendezvous of artists and musicians. Mozart had died a few years back; and Beethoven, a young man of twenty-eight years of age, was taking his place in the musical world of Vienna. Beethoven, who was an ardent Republican and a man of a frank and impulsive nature, became an habitué of the French Embassy, and a friendship sprang up between

¹ Dry, ii. 370.

² See p. 32, *ante*.

³ Masson, 172; Dry, ii. 394.

him and the Ambassador.¹ But no personal impression, however favourable, could prevent his position from being incongruous and distasteful; and he was pressing the French Government to recall him, when his release came sooner than he expected.

The rock upon which Bernadotte's mission split was the delicate one of the public display of republican emblems. Already it had been his duty to complain to the Austrian Foreign Office of insults offered to the tricolour by a mob in Venice. Now he was himself faced by the same question in Vienna. The display of these emblems roused popular fury because they reminded the people of the ghastly horrors of invasion and carnage.

Bernadotte found himself reproached by the Directory and taunted by the Parisian newspapers for backwardness in this respect. Doubts were thrown upon the sincerity of his republicanism; and stories were revived of his moderation in Italy, where his troops had been dubbed "gentlemen" instead of simple "citizens."²

He had ordered a picture of "Liberty" to be hung over the door of the Embassy. But the police had arranged with the artist to produce a wretched caricature; and the picture had been rejected. Meanwhile Bernadotte supplied its place with a banner, and wrote to the Directory a letter of explanation, adding, "a tricolour flag temporarily occupies the place destined for the republican emblem."

It happened that, on the very day of the hanging out of the flag, the youth of Vienna were engaged in organising a fête in honour of the Austrian volunteers who had come forward to defend Vienna against the French armies in which the Ambassador himself had been a general. After their dinner-hour the demonstrators paraded the streets.

When the tricolour flag was seen to be displayed upon the balcony of the Embassy, a crowd collected and began to hoot and call for the removal of the objectionable emblem. As there was no response, they began to

¹ Masson, 182; Dry, ii. 392.

² Masson, 185, 196; Dry, ii. 405-414; see p. 49, *ante*.

throw missiles. The Ambassador and his staff, who were at dinner, were disturbed by the noise in the street, followed by the crashing of stones through a window.

The Ambassador descended to the porch and remonstrated with the mob without effect. He then proceeded to write a protest to the Austrian Government. The tumult increased until one of the crowd climbed the balustrade and tore down the flag, which was carried in triumph to an open space. The flag was then burnt, and its ashes were carried to the Imperial Palace, before which a demonstration was made in honour of the Emperor.

The crowd, having burned the flag, broke into the Lichtenstein Palace, sacked the ground-floor, and proceeded to mount the stairs. Here they were met by the Ambassador and his staff, who stood at the head of the staircase with drawn swords and warned the people that they would sell their lives dearly. Some shots were fired and several persons were wounded. At last, about midnight, a squadron of cuirassiers arrived and dispersed the rioters.

The Ambassador sent three letters to the Foreign Minister, insisting upon the repudiation of the outrage by proclamation, upon the arrest and punishment of its perpetrators, and upon the replacement of the flag by an Austrian officer. Von Thugut sent a reply expressing his sorrow and promising a vigorous investigation. Bernadotte treated this reply as utterly inadequate and addressed a letter to the Emperor demanding his passports. The letter was firm, yet respectful, and deserves to be quoted.

“In leaving Vienna he (the Ambassador) will carry away the consoling consciousness of having left nothing undone to convince His Imperial Majesty of the peaceful and friendly disposition which the French Government entertain for him. He also rejoices in the belief that His Majesty is profoundly grieved at the attack directed against the representative of a friendly Power, and that

¹ Masson, 185, 196 ; Dry, ii. 405-414.

all the measures which the propriety demanded would have been taken, if His Majesty's intentions had been faithfully fulfilled. The Ambassador hopes that the future will confirm his opinion in some striking manner, and that a just reparation will prove to the Executive Directory that His Imperial Majesty is no less desirous than they are for the maintenance of a good understanding between the two nations."

Bernadotte sent this letter by the hand of his young aide-de-camp, Captain Gérard,¹ who, in uniform and wearing the tricolour cockade, proceeded to the palace, and ran considerable danger in carrying out his mission. The Emperor was profuse in his expressions of regret and in his promise of a searching inquiry, but Bernadotte insisted upon the reinstallation of the flag or his passports.

On the evening of the 14th April the passports were sent to the Ambassador, accompanied by an earnest request to leave the city quietly and at night so as to avoid the risk of a hostile demonstration. Bernadotte replied that he intended to leave on the morrow at noon, "in all the solemnity of broad daylight." At the stated hour he and his staff entered their carriages with their tricolour plumes and cockades displayed in the face of the assembled crowds. The Ambassador presented a defiant mien and a provocative *panache*. The Government sent an escort and lined the streets in order to prevent disturbance. Thus departed the Gascon diplomat with his passports and his tricolours, leaving behind him a quarrel which had all the appearance of a *casus belli*.²

Much has been said from different standpoints as to the cause of this *émeute*. The truth appears to be that the affair was unpremeditated on both sides, and arose out of a bizarre and incongruous situation. The position of an Ambassador of the French Republic in Vienna was an impossible one. The wisest and most experienced of diplomats would have failed to reconcile the spirit of

¹ Afterwards a Marshal of France.

² Masson, 196-204; Dry, ii. 413-417.

revolutionary France with the atmosphere of aristocratic Vienna. There was no chance of success for the Gascon soldier, whom Napoleon had induced the Directory to pitchfork from a camp into a court.

The Viennese affair was a nine days' wonder all over Europe and was not quickly forgotten. The incident completely rehabilitated Bernadotte with the Republicans of France, by whom his attitude was regarded as the embodiment of what they admired under the name of "Republican Pride." On the other hand, it caused him to be looked upon by moderates and monarchists as a type of what they detested under the name of "Republican Insolence." They dubbed him "the man of Vienna with the little flag." This was the note which was struck and dwelt upon in England. For example, we find *The Times* of a later date using Bernadotte's Viennese ambassadorship as an argument against coming to terms with France.¹ "What would a peace avail us which would grant protection for other Bernadottes to come to this country and diffuse among us the seeds of revolution?"

Metternich, who was a young man on the lower rungs of the diplomatic ladder and was afterwards to become one of the most famous diplomats in Europe, seems to have derived some consolation from the reflection that it was the Lichtenstein Palace, and not the Metternich town house, that had suffered in the riot. We find him writing to his wife on 22nd April: "Thank Heaven we did not let our house to the Ambassador: there is no depending on these men."²

Bernadotte left Vienna on 15th April and stayed at Rastadt for a month while the Directory were considering how to deal with the *affaire* of the flag. Their first impulse was to treat the incident as a national affront, and to demand a public reparation. Before they had adopted any definite plan of action Napoleon came to them, accompanied by Talleyrand. They severely cen-

¹ *The Times*, 9th October, 1798.

² Letter dated 22nd April, 1798.

sured Bernadotte for imprudence, hotheadedness, and failure to understand the popular sentiment of the Viennese. Barras replied :

“ What would you have had him do ? Should he have died ? It would truly have been a Roman act, worthy of ancient Rome, at least, if not of modern Rome. Well, then, citizens ” (addressing Bonaparte and Talleyrand), “ you may put such high-flown maxims into practice yourselves. Moreover ” (addressing Bonaparte), “ was it not you who worried us to make a diplomat of Bernadotte, and who had him deprived of the command of the Army of Italy ? ”¹

After some vacillation the Directory, becoming alarmed at Napoleon's dictatorial tone, hastened his departure for Egypt. Then they instructed Talleyrand to find a way of making public amends to Bernadotte without provoking a rupture with Austria. First they offered him the command of an army on the Rhine, which he promptly refused. Then they offered him the Ambassadorship to the Batavian Republic (Holland), with a letter acknowledging the “ services which he had rendered in the two careers to which he had been successively called.”² This offer was refused by Bernadotte in a letter to which the Government gave an official character by allowing its publication in the *Moniteur*. It concluded as follows :

“ It gives me pleasure to think that the time is not far distant when the policy of the Government will permit them to inform the French people of the exact truth. I beg you, Citizen Directors, to receive the tribute of my gratitude. You have rightly felt that the reputation of a man who had contributed to place upon its pedestal the statue of liberty was a national property.”³

This was a characteristic letter, with its daring taunt to the Government that they were concealing the truth for reasons of policy, and its Gascon sensitiveness where glory and personal reputation were concerned.

¹ Barras, iii. 207-13 ; (Eng. Tr.) iii. 362-370 ; see p. 70, *ante*.

² *Mémoires, etc., d'un homme d'État*, v. 521, 522.

³ *Le Moniteur*, 1st June, 1798 ; Dry, ii. 439, 440.

CHAPTER IX

MARRIAGE

JULY—AUGUST 1798

BERNADOTTE'S Viennese adventure made him a lion of Parisian society in the summer of 1798. It was the time of the Incroyables, who made the drawing-rooms of the Directory notorious by the extravagance of their dress and manners. At Madame de Staël's salon Bernadotte met the Constitutional Republicans, who looked upon her as their queen, and his opinions coincided with theirs. But he was beginning to apprehend the dangers of a Royalist restoration or of a military dictatorship, and he was now drifting towards an alliance with the advanced Republicans¹ because he saw that they were the most uncompromising and the most reliable defenders of the existing system.

Soon after his return from Vienna, a tragic incident occurred which created a sensation in Paris and displayed the best side of Bernadotte's character. One of the terrible laws of that time made it a capital offence for a Royalist *émigré* to return to France. This savage piece of legislation was a sequel to the confiscations of the Revolution. Much of the property of the *émigrés* had been converted to public or private purposes, and the new proprietors did not wish their new possessions to be haunted by the apparition of their former owners.

In the summer of 1798 the Marquis d'Ambert, formerly colonel of the Royal-la-Marine regiment, was arrested as an *émigré* who had returned to France in violation of the law. He was forthwith brought before a summary tribunal and sentenced to be shot.

¹ They were nicknamed "Jacobins," but they had no real resemblance to the "Jacobins" of the Revolution.

Bernadotte, who had just refused a command and an ambassadorship, asked the Directors to reward him by sparing the life of his former colonel. Barras, the head of the Government, would have acceded to this appeal ; but the majority insisted on the death penalty.

“ After having revealed,” writes Barras, “ perhaps somewhat severely, the weak side of Bernadotte as a public man, I should consider myself worthy of censure, were I to overlook traits which reflect credit on the private individual. He had heard of the arrest of M. d'Ambert, the colonel of his old regiment of Royal-la-Marine, in which he had served as a private and as a sergeant. It was on this occasion that his sincere and generous soul stood revealed to us. He promptly called on the Directory to beg that his former colonel's offence might be condoned. ‘ It is,’ he said, ‘ the only price I ask for my services.’ Bernadotte had already, on a former occasion at the time of a riot in Marseilles, saved the life of M. d'Ambert. In those days he was nothing more than a sergeant.¹ He had in the meanwhile become a general, but he was not to be successful on this occasion.”²

This incident is alluded to in several of the memoirs of that day. Madame de Chastenay, a friend of Madame d'Ambert's, writes : “ Bernadotte ran to the aid of his old comrade. I must do justice to his goodness of heart.”³ “ He sought the Directors,” wrote Madame de Staël, “ and asked of them, as the sole reward of his services, the pardon of the colonel. They were inflexible ; they gave the name of justice to an equal distribution of misery.”⁴

Bernadotte was not satisfied with interceding for his old colonel. He induced the gendarmes who formed d'Ambert's escort to lose sight of their prisoner, who was thus afforded an opportunity for escape. D'Ambert preferred to trust to the merits of his case, and to some safe-conduct, in the efficacy of which he placed an un-

¹ See pp. 12, 13, *ante*.

² Barras, iii. 151, 152 ; (Eng. Tr.) iii. 193.

³ Madame de Chastenay, i. 352.

⁴ *Considerations on the French Revolution* (Eng. Tr.) ii. 190, 191.

founded reliance. He allowed himself to be retaken, and thus missed his last chance of eluding the fate from which his former sergeant had done his best to save him.¹

Prominent in the new Parisian world was Joseph Bonaparte, the eldest of that remarkable group of brothers and sisters of Napoleon who were beginning to bask in the rays of his rising sun. Joseph Bonaparte had married Julie Clary, the elder daughter of the merchant of Marseilles who was mentioned in a former chapter.² Her sister Désirée resided with them in Paris.

Joseph had originally fallen in love with Désirée and had become engaged to her. But Napoleon had pronounced her elder sister Julie more suited to Joseph, and had designed Désirée for himself. Joseph had deferred to the wishes of his imperious brother and had married Julie. Napoleon's engagement to Désirée hung fire until at last he wrote that the "affair must be concluded or broken off."³ It was broken off, but it made an indelible impression upon Napoleon's mind. "Désirée," wrote Montholon,⁴ at St. Helena, "was Napoleon's first love." She never ceased to be an object of his tender interest. She was a charming young lady who has been hit off by a well-known writer⁵ as "the pretty girl of Marseilles with the gay smile."

It was after his return from Vienna that Bernadotte met Désirée Clary, and promptly fell in love with her. As a child she had seen him at Marseilles when he had been billeted in her home, and had been rejected by her father because he was only a non-commissioned officer.² In the interval he had made his mark as a general and his name had become a household word in the Wars of the Revolution. He had quite recently been the central figure of the Viennese *émeute*. Besides, he was, according to a pen-portrait by a French writer, "a prepossessing

¹ Pingaud, 36.

² Pp. 10, 11, *ante*.

³ *Roi Joseph*, i. 129-153.

⁴ *Mélanges*, i. 217. General Montholon accompanied Napoleon to St. Helena and acted as his secretary and confidant.

⁵ Émile Faguet.

cavalier, who gave promise of a great future" ¹; and in the words of another, "tall, well-built, with a handsome appearance, eyes bright and piercing, and features energetic, clear-cut in the style of the great Condé." ²

But what, more than anything else, excited Désirée's interest in him was the reputation which he had acquired of having the courage and force of character to stand out against the great man who had been her fiancé and now loomed so large in the public eye. She afterwards said that "she had consented to marry Bernadotte, when they told her that he was a man who could hold his own with Napoleon (*qu'il était un homme à tenir tête à Napoléon*)."³

Désirée, after her engagement to Napoleon had been broken off, had become engaged to General Duphot, a soldier of high merit who gave promise of a brilliant career, but the engagement had been cut short by Duphot's assassination by a mob in the streets of Rome. Her next suitor had been General Junot,⁴ who sent General Marmont⁵ to convey his proposals. Désirée declined them, but confessed that she might have given a different answer if the messenger had spoken for himself. "It was my destiny," said Désirée, "to be loved by heroes."

A French historian has alluded to her suitors in the following passage :

"Désirée Clary," he writes, "was intended for earthly honours, and at least they rested lightly on her head. Let us recapitulate. She is betrothed to Joseph, then to Napoleon, then to Duphot; she refuses Junot and would be glad to accept Marmont; at last she married Bernadotte. With Joseph she would have been an Imperial Princess, Queen of Naples and of Spain; with Napoleon, Empress of the French; with Duphot, if he had lived,

¹ Dry, ii. 450.

² General Zurlinden, 64.

³ *Désirée*, par Hothschild, 32.

⁴ A.D.C. to Napoleon, afterwards general and Duke of Abrantès.

⁵ Afterwards Marshal and Duke of Ragusa.

probably Maréchale and Duchess ; with Junot, Duchess of Abrantès ; with Marmont, Maréchale and Duchess of Ragusa—— ”¹

Here we must break off M. Houssaye's reflections. We must not anticipate what lay before her.

Among those who signed the marriage register, on 17th August, 1798, were Joseph Bonaparte and his wife Julie, and Lucien Bonaparte and his wife Christine. Madame Junot, who was present at the wedding, gives us an intimate glimpse of the commencement of the Bernadotte *ménage*. She tells us that Désirée was so fond of her husband that she was “ continually in tears when he had gone out, because he was absent. When he was going out, more tears ; and when he came home she wept because he might have to go away again—perhaps in a week, but, at any rate, he would have to go.”²

Here let us, for a moment, skip the events of the next chapter in order to tell the reader the sequel of these nuptials. On the following 4th July Désirée gave birth to a son—her only child—to whom the name of Oscar was given. Napoleon, who was kept informed by his brothers and sisters of all that happened or was expected to happen in the family circle, wrote from Egypt expressing a wish to be the child's godfather. The name Oscar appears to have been derived from the Ossianic poems, of which Napoleon and his brothers were enthusiastic admirers.

Bernadotte's marriage created more than one subtle link between him and Napoleon. In the first place, he became connected by marriage with the Bonaparte family ; and this family connection led to affectionate relations with nearly all Napoleon's brothers and sisters.

Joseph Bonaparte resembled Napoleon in appearance, but was dreamy, lazy and comparatively unambitious.

¹ Henry Houssaye.

² La Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*, ii. 154, 55 ; (Eng. Tr.) i. 286, 287.



DÉSIRÉE CLARY.

Who married General Bernadotte, August 17, 1798, and became Queen of Sweden.

After the portrait by Gérard.

Socially he was amiable and agreeable ; and his relations with his brother-in-law Bernadotte were always affectionate. Lucien Bonaparte was eloquent and vivacious, and was capable of warm impulses and of energetic actions. But he had more taste for letters and ease and domesticity than for the battle of public life. He became such a close friend of Bernadotte's that he sided with him and was his confidant in his differences with Napoleon.¹

The Bonaparte sisters soon came to look upon the fiery, fascinating Gascon as a brother and a friend. Eliza was a magnificent blue-stocking, Pauline a picture of loveliness, and Caroline a pretty woman with a touch of Napoleon's will. They remained friends of Bernadotte's even after he became the enemy of Napoleon. They knew how difficult it was for any man of independent mind and character to render unqualified submission to their dictatorial brother.

Between Bernadotte and Napoleon this marriage created a tie which sometimes exercised a restraining influence upon the conduct of each towards the other. It cramped Bernadotte's freedom and energy in his opposition to Napoleon. On the other hand, Napoleon was once heard to say that, on three occasions,² he would have had Bernadotte shot, if it had not been for Désirée. We need not take too seriously so highly coloured a figure of speech. But it is undeniably true that "the pretty girl with the gay smile," whom he married in August 1798, became Bernadotte's mascot in more than one crisis of his adventurous career.

¹ Napoleon's younger brothers, Louis and Jerome, were not mixed up with Bernadotte's career.

² Napoleon probably referred to the *coup d'état* of Brumaire, the Plot of the Placards and the affair of Jena, pp. 117, 147, 185-194, *post*.

CHAPTER X

A PHANTOM ARMY AND SOME REJECTED OPPORTUNITIES

SEPTEMBER 1798—JULY 1799

THE period of less than a year covered by this chapter was not a period of big achievements, but it gave opportunities for the display of the chivalry, the prudence and the bravado which were so strangely mixed in Bernadotte.

Two months after his marriage he was appointed to command an army on the Rhine, where he occupied himself in conciliating his enemies with such success that a Treaty of Peace was arrived at with the Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt. The Landgrave's envoy thanked him for his clemency and added, in accordance with the diplomatic fashion of that time: "General, my Sovereign makes you the offer of a domain. Our treasury is too exhausted to give you a gift of money." "Do you take me for a Jew?" replied Bernadotte. "I only act from humanity. Not a word more. Hasten to Darmstadt and relieve the anxiety of the Landgravine." He received a shower of honours from the universities of Geissen and Heidelberg and from the Academy of Hesse. The latter body described him as:

"Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, General of Division of the French Republic, very celebrated for his exploits, very brave, very clement towards our country while it was occupied by his troops, very generous and liberal towards our Academy, very benevolent towards all those who cultivate the Muses, illustrious protector of Science and of Art."¹

¹ Hans Kloeber, 109, 113; *L'Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, vii. 614.

From Geissen Bernadotte wrote a letter to his brother-in-law Joseph Bonaparte, advocating the sending of an expedition for the relief of Napoleon in Egypt. Perhaps he dreamt of himself as commander of the adventure. The letter is entirely friendly towards Napoleon, and supports the opinion of those who believe that there need never have been any serious quarrel between them if Napoleon, instead of aiming at a dictatorship, had been content to be the first General of the Republic.

The writer enforced his argument by precedents from Roman history, which he had been studying ever since his dinner with Napoleon at Passariano in the previous year ¹:

“ If the Directory adopts this course, more than one bourgeois at London and Paris will remember the language which the famous Hannibal addressed to the senate of Carthage after the battle of Cannæ. Why should not our Republic act as Rome did after the event which plunged in mourning the capital of the world ? ”

The letter ends with a cluster of messages which remind us that Bernadotte's intimate circle comprised the men and women of the Bonaparte family.

“ Good-bye, my dear brother-in-law. Excuse this scrawl, if you have had the patience to read so far as this. A thousand tender messages to Désirée. Do not forget to give my regards to Julie [Madame Joseph Bonaparte], and to Christine [Madame Lucien Bonaparte]. Remember me to Lucien, Paulette [Pauline Bonaparte], and Leclerc [Pauline's husband]. I embrace you with affection.” ²

Soon after peace had been concluded with Hesse-Darmstadt, war became imminent in Italy. Bernadotte was now summoned to the Luxembourg Palace by the Directory and was offered the command-in-chief of the army of Italy, and was invited to “ emulate the achievements of Napoleon in that theatre of war.” What followed is related by the Director Barras in his memoirs.

¹ See p. 66, *ante*.

² *Morrison Collection of Autograph Letters*, 170, 172.

Bernadotte insisted that the Army of Italy was utterly inadequate in point of numbers; and he refused to accept the command unless the Government would reinforce the army with at least 20,000 men. He expounded his opinion in a speech which Barras tells us "was accompanied by animated gestures and picturesque phrases." He afterwards embodied it in a memorandum which Barras described as "a document more remarkable for its logic and convincing eloquence than any that I have ever read in critical moments."¹

"Bonaparte," he said to the Directors, "never ceased calling for more troops; and you, Citizen Directors, never ceased granting them. The 20,000 men whom I conducted from the Army of Sambre and Meuse amounted to something, although he enjoyed hearing them called 'Gentlemen,' by the 'citizen' soldiers of Masséna and Augereau. I think they proved at the Tagliamento and at Gradisca that they had not to fall back upon 'the citizens' for carrying out their operations. Our troops are excellent. They are the best in Europe. They have all the qualities. One can go with them to heaven or to hell. But there is a certain numerical force, which cannot be altogether dispensed with in war, in the immense developments which occur nowadays, when one has to guard an extended line of territory, garrison fortified places, and, at the same time, advance to give battle."

The Directory, being unwilling or unable to comply with Bernadotte's conditions, appointed another commander, who sustained a crushing defeat by which France lost all her conquests in Italy. Everything turned out as Bernadotte had forecasted. Barras never forgot this incident. He frequently recurred to it and admitted that the conditions which Bernadotte had laid down were justified by events, and that his advice to the Government turned out to have been well-informed and sound.²

Soon after his refusal of the Italian command Bernadotte was sent to the Rhine, and was charged with the

¹ Barras, iii. 314; (Eng. Tr.) iii. 395; cf. *Le Spectateur Militaire*, 1^e série, xiv. 578 et seq.

² Cf. Jomini, xi. 116.

siege of Phillippsburg, a key-fortress of South Germany, which was defended by a formidable garrison under the Rhinegrave of Salm.

The troops at his disposal were inadequate for the purpose ; but he was promised a reinforcement of 48,000 men. It was in vain that he clamoured for the promised troops. Only a few detachments reached him in dribblets ; so that he was left to besiege a fortress without men or materials. Finding himself in command of a phantom army, he fell back upon his Gascon resources by issuing a vigorous summons to surrender, in which he warned the Rhinegrave that “ he held the lives of the inhabitants in his hands, and that he would not restrain the fury of his troops.”¹

The Rhinegrave was not to be cowed by batteries of this description. Bernadotte’s clemency was too well known. His summons was not taken seriously by the inhabitants or by the garrison. They treated it as a piece of transparent bravado. So it was ; but his bravado accomplished its object. It provoked a protest which diverted the energies of the combatants into a diplomatic correspondence, and turned attention away from the weakness of his army. His instructions to Ney, who was serving under him, show the desperate straits to which he was reduced. He rests his hopes upon treachery and venality in the ranks of the enemy, and points out that “ when one is weak one is driven to be *rusé*.”¹ Finally he retired broken down in health and disgusted at the failure of the Government to support him.

General Jourdan has written a *précis* of this campaign in which he describes Bernadotte “ as a brilliant soldier, a true Republican and a sincere friend,” gives him credit for having done everything that depended on him, and blames the Directory for not having sent him the promised troops.² The Director Barras compared Bernadotte, when he retired on sick leave, to “ Achilles sulking in his tent,” but admitted that he had “ acted promptly and skilfully

¹ *Paris pendant* 1799, xxi. 356.

² Jourdan’s *Précis*, 63, 64.

under the circumstances," although his army consisted only of a few untrained recruits. He adds : " It required all Bernadotte's talent to make something of them, and yet, with this phantom of an army, he succeeded in temporarily commanding respect." ¹

A campaign conducted under such conditions could not enhance Bernadotte's reputation. Meanwhile Napoleon's star was acquiring fresh brilliancy ; and both the sympathy and the curiosity of the public were aroused by the movements of the commander of the army of Egypt, who could boast that he " rose in the morning in Africa and lay down at night in Asia."

During this campaign General Ney refused an offer of promotion to the rank of General of Division. His refusal is referred to in the following letter from Bernadotte which is characteristic of the relations which existed between these two brave soldiers, whose careers were destined to be strangely entangled :

" I advise you," wrote Bernadotte to Ney, " not to oppose the wishes of the Directory by persisting in a refusal to accept the rank of General of Division. Question yourself, my dear Ney, and answer in all good faith whether the call of your conscience (*le cri de votre conscience*) does not bid you lay aside a modesty which becomes misplaced and even dangerous when it is carried to excess. . . . I write paternally, but you will understand every thing that comes from a man who is attached to you by bonds of the strongest friendship and the most unbounded esteem." ²

After six weeks' leave Bernadotte returned to Paris, where an event had just occurred which was fraught with serious consequences for him and for the Directorial Constitution. A vacancy among the five Directors had been filled up by the election of the ex-abbé Sieyès, lately Ambassador at Berlin, a pompous pedant who, by a successful pamphlet and a bearing of mysterious reserve, had gained a spurious prestige among the men of the

¹ Jourdan's *Précis*, 63, 64, 110 ; Barras, iii. 324, 337.

² *Ney*, par Bonnal, 54.

Revolution. He became a Director with the object of destroying the Directory and of substituting a constitution of his own making.¹ His first step was to obtain Barras's co-operation in getting rid of those of his colleagues who were likely to oppose his designs. When Bernadotte returned to Paris, these two Directors—Sieyès and Barras—were looking for a general to accomplish their object by means of a military *coup d'état*.

While Sieyès and Barras were looking out for a general to effectuate their purpose, Bernadotte found himself in a group of officers who were discussing the political situation. In the course of their debate, General Joubert, who had already carried out civil revolutions in Holland and in Italy and was eager to try his hand on a larger scale, exclaimed: "A lot of time is being wasted in talk. I shall put an end to it all, whenever it is wished, with twenty Grenadiers!" Bernadotte, not to be outdone at gasconading, remarked: "Twenty Grenadiers would be too many—a corporal's guard would be enough."

When a report of this conversation reached Barras he sent for Bernadotte and offered him the opportunity.

"Well, then, General," he said, "we shall give you command of the troops in Paris; you will have no violent operation to perform. All that is required is to preserve order and prevent excesses on the part of the Republicans against the recalcitrants."

Barras describes Bernadotte as showing an obvious disinclination to lend himself to an unconstitutional proceeding.

"Citizen Director," he replied, "General Joubert came to Paris before me; he has taken, in this connection, an initiative which I might perhaps be showing but little delicacy in disputing. I beg you to permit me to go to him myself, and to lay your offer before him, as behoves a comrade."²

Before seeking Joubert, Bernadotte confided to his aides-de-camp the offer which had been made to him.

¹ See p. 28, *ante*.

² Barras, iii. 361, 362; (Eng. Tr.) 458, 459.

They urged him to seize the opportunity. But Bernadotte shrank, as he had shrunk on the 18th Fructidor, from taking part in a military assault upon a constituted authority; and Joubert, who had no such scruples, seized the chance with alacrity. The *coup d'état* which followed is known in history as "the *coup d'état* of the 30th Prairial."¹ It took the form of a military demonstration, by means of which two of the objectionable Directors were bullied into a reluctant resignation. Another Director was got rid of by a flaw in the legality of his election.

The three vacant places in the Directory were filled by the election of Gohier, a judge and ex-Minister of Justice, highly and justly esteemed but with little following or force of character; Moulins, a respectable general of the second rank; and Roger Ducos, a creature of Sieyès. Judge Gohier and General Moulins were loyal to the existing Constitution, Sieyès and Roger Ducos were resolved upon overthrowing it, and were meditating another military *coup d'état* for that purpose. Barras held the balance. For the moment Bernadotte was unemployed. He was entirely loyal to the Directorial Constitution, and he scented that there was danger in the air. But he does not appear to have realised how rapidly events were verging to a great catastrophe.

A little more than a year had passed since his return from Vienna. In the meantime he had commanded in Hesse-Darmstadt and at the siege of Phillippsburg, had rejected the opportunity of taking the principal part in the *coup d'état* of Prairial, and had refused offers of the command of the Army of the Rhine and the Army of Italy, as well as the Ambassadorship to Holland. He was now to find a new sphere of activity.

¹ June 18th, 1799.

CHAPTER XI

MINISTER OF WAR

2ND JULY—14TH SEPTEMBER 1799

IN July 1799 the Directory found itself confronted with the impendency of four invasions. At the long last, the aggressive policy of the French Republic had united the principal European Powers into what was called "The Second Coalition." They had closed round France in an almost continuous ring; and her extended frontiers had to be defended in Italy, in Switzerland, in Holland and on the Rhine. The armies of the Republic were worn out. The generals were clamouring for recruits, food, clothes, arms and pay. But the credit of the Republic was at the lowest ebb and they clamoured in vain.

The Directory and the Legislature had made an ineffectual effort to cope with this serious situation by promulgating decrees for universal conscription, and for a forced loan of a hundred millions. But so deep was the general distrust of the Government and of its financial stability, and so widespread was the wane of public spirit and of military enthusiasm that the decrees became dead-letters almost as soon as they were promulgated. The Directors quickly realised that the only possible means of obtaining conscripts and millions was to find a popular and capable man to take charge of the Ministry of War.

The majority of the Directory decided to offer the post to Bernadotte; and two of them have explained their reasons in their memoirs. Barras tells us that "what was wanted was a man who possessed the confidence of the army and a reputation founded upon character and achievement. Such a man was Berna-

dotte." He also reminded his colleagues how Bernadotte's opinion and advice, when he refused the command of the Army of Italy, had been justified by events.¹ Gohier was of opinion that "what France needed was a general capable of restoring the moral force of the army and of animating it with fresh enthusiasm; and that Bernadotte was singularly fitted for that task."²

Sieyès, who was backed by his henchman Roger Ducos, objected to Bernadotte, because he rightly perceived that he would be an obstacle to his own design of overthrowing the Directory. "He is a Gascon *par excellence*," said Sieyès, "who belongs to the country of Henri IV and is a liar like the good King." Bernadotte, we may feel sure, had no objection to being called a liar in such company.

Bernadotte's Ministry lasted only ten weeks.³ Yet a large-sized volume might be filled with all that he said and did and wrote during that brief period. His tireless energy has been described as follows by the historian Vandal:

"Bernadotte (as Minister of War) was indefatigable with tongue and pen. His speeches, proclamations and circulars constitute a curious monument of revolutionary and Gascon eloquence, a strange mixture of military ardour and incoherent pathos. Rising at three o'clock every morning, he left his small house in the Rue Cisalpine and was first to arrive at the Ministry. He attended to everything, exerted himself to repair the service thoroughly, to push forward the enlistment of recruits, to refresh the military stores, to reorganise the armies, to cheer the drooping spirits of officers and men. He struggled with restless activity against the chaos of difficulties which faced him."⁴

The conscription was the most urgent problem of the moment; and the new Minister threw himself into that

¹ Barras, iii. 385-388; (Eng. Tr.) iii. 488-490; see p. 92, *ante*.

² Gohier, i. 40, 41.

³ 2nd July—14th Sept., 1799.

⁴ Vandal, *L'Avènement de Bonaparte*, i. 97; cf. Sorel, v. 306; Barras, iii, 417; (Eng. Tr.) iii. 529, 530.

task with such energy that he succeeded in ten weeks in calling upwards of ninety thousand men to the colours and in sending more than twenty thousand to the front. He held frequent reviews of the conscripts, which took the form of enthusiastic public demonstrations at which he made eloquent speeches. One quotation will suffice. At Courbevoie he said : " My children, you are the hope of the Fatherland. There are among you great captains. It is your duty to give peace to Europe." ¹ The simple phrase " there are among you great captains " hit the popular fancy, became a watchword of the conscription, and gave an impetus to the enrolment of recruits.

The next problem which faced the new Minister was " the cursed want of pence which vexeth public men." The Minister of Finance was Robert Lindet,² an honest, retiring, unpretentious personage, the story of whose first interview with Bernadotte has passed into French history. It was one of those incidents which must be of common occurrence among Cabinet Ministers, namely, an onslaught by the chief of a great spending department upon his colleague, the guardian of the public purse. Rarely perhaps has a more vigorous assault been made upon an emptier exchequer.

Bernadotte depicted to Lindet the miserable condition of the four French armies. Lindet retorted by painting in no less dismal hues the hopeless condition of the national finances. Bernadotte then drew his sword and threatened to transfix somebody—presumably Lindet or in the last resort himself—if the necessary funds could not be provided.³ There was nothing to be gained by addressing Lindet as if he had been a military mutiny. The Finance Minister summoned his heads of department, who soon convinced the Minister of War of the utter emptiness of the National Exchequer.

Bernadotte now sheathed his sword, and, with Lindet,

¹ *Le Moniteur*, 15th August and 4th September.

² For Robert Lindet vide Aulard, *Les Orateurs de la Révolution*, ii. 536–539.

³ Cf. Pingaud, 34.

proceeded to approach the Parisian bankers, who politely informed them that they were willing to advance moneys to General Bernadotte at his personal risk, but if he asked it as Minister, they would not advance fifty francs, so discredited was the Directory's paper.

The foreign bankers were next approached, with such success that Bernadotte, within a month of taking office, sent two millions of money and a hundred thousand muskets to the armies. A Paris journal announced this result and added :

“ Courage, Bernadotte ! the reward of thy activity will be the triumph of the republican armies, peace and the grateful affection of all Frenchmen ! ” ¹

One day in August, Paris was draped in mourning and the Directors were stunned with despondency by bad news from Italy. General Joubert had been defeated at Novi, and had been killed in leading a charge. Next day the Gascon Minister blazed forth in a vibrant proclamation to the army which served to turn the tide of public feeling and to extract encouragement out of disaster. It was universally admired, and was praised even by Napoleon, who was gratified at a reference to himself. “ Brave friends,” wrote Bernadotte, “ the stock of brave generals is not exhausted. . . . I see among you more than one Joubert, more than one Bonaparte.” ²

But the Minister's messages to the Army of Italy were not always messages of encouragement. There were others which were sent with a sterner purpose. The defeat had been precipitated by the surrender of some fortresses. Bernadotte ordered the French commandants who had surrendered them to be brought before a court-martial in a letter which concluded as follows :

“ No commandant of a fortress can have been ignorant of the fact that the laws forbid capitulating before the town has stood an assault. Even if the laws had not so decreed, should not a Frenchman and a Republican

¹ *La Gazette de France* (28 Mess.), 16th July, 1799.

² *Le Moniteur*, 30th August, 1799.

find such a prohibition in his heart ? Do not courage and honour anticipate the law's decrees ? ”¹

In Switzerland the French under General Masséna were fighting the Austrians at a numerical disadvantage. Bernadotte improvised a shadowy corps to which he gave the title of “the Army of the Rhine,” and trumpeted abroad a projected invasion of Austrian territory in Germany. So well did this game of bluff succeed that the Archduke Charles was called away from Switzerland to repel the imaginary invasion ; and, before he could get back to Switzerland, Masséna was able to win the battle of Zurich. In this way Bernadotte blew a gust from Gascony into Masséna's sails.²

In Holland, where General Brune, with the aid of Generals Boudet and Vandamme, was resisting an Anglo-Russian Army commanded by the Duke of York, Bernadotte's promptitude in sending supplies and reinforcements enabled Brune to win two victories : “It is to him ” (Bernadotte), wrote Boudet, “that we owe all the triumphs which the Republic has gained.” “You are a man, a general and a Republican,” wrote Vandamme to Bernadotte. “You have proved that you are worthy of those three great titles.”³

Barras, in his memoirs, describes a scene at the Luxembourg Palace in connection with the campaign in Holland. The five Directors were seated in state in a chamber the walls of which were hung with war-maps. Bernadotte was being received at an audience, when, rising suddenly from his seat and walking to the map, he expounded its significance in a passionate harangue.

“Look, Citizen Directors, at Holland. . . . The English have landed and General Brune is clamouring for reinforcements. You know my lack of resources. Nevertheless, they must be found, because Holland must be saved. The consequences of its loss would be too deplor-

¹ Barras, iv. 6, 7 ; (Eng. Tr.) iv. 6.

² Sarrans, i. 32, 33 ; Jomini, xii. 355-367.

³ *Le Général Vandamme*, par A. Du Casse, ii. 20, 21, 46.

able. We must sacrifice everything for that supreme purpose. We shall save Holland—I swear it to you. As yet I have only been able to send Brune promises. But I am resolved to keep them. I am ransacking every imaginable quarter. All that I can find, I cause to go, or rather to fly, down the Rhine by express boats. . . . Holland must be saved.”

Barras says that Bernadotte’s address was so vigorous and effective that even the passionless Sieyès was carried away and exclaimed : “ General Bernadotte’s reasoning is unanswerable ! His words are golden. Holland must be saved.”¹

Paris was a hot-bed of political intrigue. All the intriguers were interested in obtaining the control or assistance of the military forces. With that object in view, the Minister of War was approached by three different political parties.

One day a Royalist emissary was reported to have come from the Duc d’Enghien, who was in Paris incognito, offering the Minister the title of Constable of France if he would use his position to restore the Bourbons. Bernadotte is said to have rejected the proposals and to have given the Duke three days to escape across the frontier, warning him that on the fourth day he would inform the Directory of what had happened.²

On another day came the Republicans, headed by General Jourdan, warning him that Sieyès was plotting the overthrow of the Republic and inviting him to take a lead in a republican *coup d’état*. General Jourdan tells us that Bernadotte’s reply was “ characteristic of his loyalty of character.” He appears to have asked for proofs of the plot, which were not forthcoming, and to have refused to take any action, while holding a ministerial portfolio, which would be an abuse of the confidence of the Directory.³

There remained the Bonapartes. When he returned

¹ Barras, iii. 467-470 ; (Eng. Tr.), 591, 596.

² Sarrans, i. 36.

³ Jourdan, *Notice sur le 18^e Brumaire* ; id., *Mém. inédits, Le Carnet*, vii. 161-163.

home from the Ministry, he usually found Joseph and Lucien at his house on the pretence of inquiring after his wife's health. On one occasion they sounded him upon the subject of recalling Napoleon from Egypt and hinted at the possibility of his early return to France. Bernadotte replied that to recall him at this moment would be construed as offering him a Dictatorship, and that, if he were to quit his army without leave, he would expose himself to punishment under the Military Laws.

Meanwhile Sieyès had begun to take umbrage at Bernadotte's growing popularity, which received a striking exemplification when six hundred veterans proceeded to the Ministry of War and offered their services to the Minister. His jealousy was aroused at the impression which Bernadotte was making upon public opinion. "His proclamations," he used to say, "animate and inflame France. We are no longer of any account. Nobody takes any notice of us. It is the Minister of War who constitutes the Government." Barras, who, after some hesitation, had learned to respect and to admire Bernadotte, makes the following comment :

"It is quite true that Bernadotte was actually governing by his vigorous action. He was the only military patriotic and administrative bond which prevented at this moment the breaking up of the Republic. Bernadotte was as simple-minded and loyal as he was energetic. All his plans and acts tended to the benefit and defence of the Republic. They were marked by the utmost frankness, and would have served to strengthen the Directory, if the Directory had been susceptible of union amongst its members."¹

Sieyès did not dispute Bernadotte's efficiency. What he resented was his fidelity to the existing republican Constitution, and his popularity with its defenders. It was obvious that he would be a serious obstacle to its overthrow. Sieyès used to say when the Minister entered with his portfolio, "What next is coming out of this

¹ Barras, iv. 5.

box of the Jacobins? ” or “ Here comes Catiline.” Alluding to Bernadotte’s dark complexion and prominent nose, he spoke of him as a “ blackbird who imagined himself an eagle.”¹ Bernadotte used to reproach Sieyès with want of patriotic enthusiasm and energy. “ It has been made too clear to me,” said the Minister, “ that you are all ice, when you ought to be all fire.”

Sieyès finally resolved to get rid of Bernadotte. He began by offering him the command-in-chief of the Army of the Rhine. Bernadotte refused to accept a command “ while his task at the Ministry remained uncompleted.” Then Sieyès turned to Barras, who frankly tells us that, as Sieyès was more intractable than Bernadotte, he made up his mind to follow the line of least resistance. So he set himself to induce Bernadotte to resign by appealing to what he called “ the Gascon’s capacity for noble emotion.” He implored him to give way in order to prevent such a public scandal as a quarrel between a Minister and one of the Directors. He then appealed to his military spirit. “ Is the occupation of a ministerial armchair,” he said, “ equal to being on horseback in command of an army? ”

“ But,” said Bernadotte, “ I am doing more than command troops now—I direct them all. We are on the eve of attaining great results. At the moment when I have carried the game so far, it would be very painful for me to abandon the chess-board with which the Directory has entrusted me. . . . Do you ask me to relinquish my office to another? I have no thirst for office. Let him who has that thirst come and slake it. Do they want my resignation for the sake of peace? Very well; I will give you my resignation.”

Barras says that he was so deeply touched by the Minister’s reply and by the *beau geste* which accompanied it that he prevented him from writing his resignation, and left him free to act as he might feel disposed.²

¹ Barras, iv. 10.

² Id., iv. 12, 13; (Eng. Tr.) iv. 14, 15.



BARRAS.

Director of the French Republic, 1795-1799.

After the portrait by Raffet.



SIEYÈS.

Director of the French Republic, 1799.

Who became a Senator and a Count of the Empire.
Who became a Senator and a Count of the Empire.

Sieyès, however, insisted upon taking Bernadotte at his word. Having persuaded Barras to agree to this course, he sent for his faithful henchman Roger Ducos, and these three Directors, without consulting their colleagues, proceeded to treat the Minister's resignation as having been received and to accept it, at the same time offering him the command of an army. Bernadotte sent a reply which was published next day in the Paris journals.

“You have accepted a resignation which I have not given . . . after twenty years of uninterrupted labours you will be able to judge whether or not I have earned my retirement from active service on half-pay. . . . I do not conceal from you that I stand in need of repose.”¹

Sieyès lost no time in again taking him at his word and in accepting his offer of retirement on half-pay.

When the other two Directors, Gohier and Moulins, became aware of what had happened, they lodged an official protest, which they followed up by making a state visit to the Ex-Minister. Arrayed in their robes of office, and escorted by the directorial guard, they proceeded through the streets and boulevards to Bernadotte's little house in the Rue Cisalpine, and expressed to him their sympathy and their appreciation of his services, thus doing all that lay in their power to give prestige and public approbation to the retiring Minister.

Thus ended an incident in which Bernadotte was outplayed by cooler antagonists. Sieyès appears to have taken clever advantage of the Minister's impulsive offer of retirement which Barras had refrained from accepting. “The Béarnais,” wrote Albert Vandal, “was, on this occasion, the dupe of his own rhetoric.” Another writer happily describes him as “having resigned *malgré lui*.”²

Before we leave the subject of Bernadotte's Ministry,

Le Moniteur, 17th September, 1799.

² Pingaud, 40.

let us cite some opinions about its results. Napoleon, who became interested in painting an ugly and distorted picture of the condition of France at the date of his return from Egypt, declared that Bernadotte as Minister "committed nothing but blunders and organised nothing." Director Barras, on the other hand, declared that Napoleon "lived and made armies live for several years on the immense materials which Bernadotte, with his patriotic ardour and eloquence, had created in a few months' labour," and Director Gohier was of the same opinion.¹

In discriminating between these conflicting judgments some help may be derived from the testimony of Bernadotte's successor, Dubois Crancé, a man of considerable distinction.² Within three weeks of Bernadotte's retirement French victories in Holland and Switzerland followed each other in rapid succession. When Dubois Crancé, as Minister for War, publicly presented the captured flags to the Directory, he concluded his address by saying: "I cannot usurp any share in these victories. They were prepared by my predecessor."³

Bernadotte's defence of his ministry was contained in an official report to the Government, in which he claimed that, by his appeals to the army, he had revived the dead corpse of military enthusiasm; that he had clothed, equipped and armed more than ninety thousand conscripts; that he had collected forty thousand horses; and that he had sent large supplies and reinforcements to the armies. He concluded with a modest disclaimer:

"It gives me pleasure to state openly that the glory of battles won belongs in the first place to the generous soldiers who lose their lives in daily engagements, next to the intrepid generals who electrify them and stimulate their courage, and, in the last place only, to the Ministers."

¹ Barras, iv. 127; (Eng. Tr.) iv. 162; Gohier, i. 88 et seq.

² Dubois Crancé had been the originator of conscription in 1789, and of promotion from the lower ranks in 1793.

³ Barras, iv. 24; (Eng. Tr.) iv. 27.

Barras, commenting upon Bernadotte's report, adds : " The noble sentiment of justice and disinterestedness, which pervades this report, will reveal the principle of my estimation, and the reason of my praise." ¹ The change in Barras's attitude of mind towards Bernadotte is marked and noticeable. He had dropped cynicism and sarcasm and had come to give him credit for independence and honesty of purpose. But it was too late. If he had supported Bernadotte against Sieyès, he might have changed the course of history.

We are now approaching a turning-point in Bernadotte's career. Hitherto his progress had been rapid and continuous. His outlook and character had exhibited strange contrasts. In politics he had been an out-and-out Republican. In his personal relations he had been a chivalrous gentleman. We are reminded of Napoleon's comment after their first meeting : " Bernadotte is a Republican grafted upon a French cavalier." ² His daring in military emergencies had been equalled by his caution in rejecting opportunities to which he felt himself unequal owing to want of materials or capacity.

The French political stage was about to be occupied with a melodrama more sensational than any since the time of Julius Cæsar. What part will Bernadotte play ? Will it be that of Pompey, or of Crassus, or of Marc Antony, or of Brutus, or of Augustus ? We shall find that, from time to time, he went near being cast or rehearsed for each one of these rôles.

¹ Barras, iv. 132 ; (Eng. Tr.) iv. 168, 169.

² See p. 45, *ante*.

CHAPTER XII

THE RETURN OF NAPOLEON FROM EGYPT—THE “ COUP D'ÉTAT ” OF BRUMAIRE

NOVEMBER 1799

BERNADOTTE, after his retirement from the Ministry of War, enjoyed a month of repose. Oscar was three months old. Désirée's social circle consisted mainly of the Bonaparte family ; but her husband was not in their secrets. He little knew that they were expecting the return of Napoleon from Egypt, and were planning a *coup d'état* to make him master of France.

The French victories which came soon after his retirement brought consolation and prestige to the Ex-Minister. Public opinion regarded him as a soldier-statesman who had given conspicuous proof of public spirit and honesty of purpose, and marked him out as a Director of France in the near future. Suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, came tidings from Egypt which overshadowed his prestige and boded ill for the Republican Constitution to which he was attached.

On the 8th of October a salute of cannon prepared the capital for the publication of a despatch from Napoleon announcing a decisive victory and the expulsion of the last Turk from Egypt.¹ The despatch was so rose-coloured as to be utterly deceptive ; but the fairy-tale was accepted without question. Bernadotte saw Paris giving itself up to exultation over the supposed victory and to enthusiasm for the supposed victor, and he heard the Parisians asking each other : “ When will Bonaparte come back ? ” Next day came the news that

¹ Vandal, i. 231.

he had landed at Fréjus. On the 16th he was in Paris, after an absence of fifteen months.¹

Napoleon had rendered himself liable to a court-martial for leaving his army without the sanction of the Government, and for landing at Fréjus without complying with the quarantine laws. A deputation of Republicans, headed by the President of the Department of the Seine, proposed to the Directory that he should be arrested, and that General Bernadotte should be appointed Commandant of Paris. Their object was to prevent the anticipated *coup d'état*. But the Directory were divided in opinion. Barras held the balance and pursued the fatal policy of following the line of least resistance. "Attendez," he said, or, in other words, "Let us wait and see."

Napoleon, on his arrival in Paris, made himself acquainted with the political situation and surveyed all the parties and coteries with his unerring *coup d'œil*. He found that the Directory was damaged in prestige, and that public opinion was ripe for a change. He quickly realised that there were, as Chateaubriand put it, "only four men who were capable of barring his path to power—namely, the Directors Sieyès and Barras, and the Generals Moreau and Bernadotte."² He cajoled Sieyès into concurrence with his designs. He isolated Barras by winning over his associates. He won over Moreau by flattery and by the gift of a beautiful Damascene sword. He tried in vain to win over Bernadotte through his brother Joseph.

The historian Vandal notices this domestic side-light in a passage in which he contrasts the Gascon general with Moreau and with the other personages who played a part in this episode :

"A very different personage from Moreau was Bernadotte, that political general, who had during his recent term of office as Minister of War stood forth in a blaze of limelight, and had seemed for the moment to be the incarnation of National Defence. His popularity re-

¹ Napoleon left General Kléber in command of the Army of Egypt. Kléber was assassinated at Cairo in the following June.

² *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*, i. 97.

mained a real one ; his striking appearance, his eloquence, his cordial manners, something grand and imposing in his greeting, gave him influence and hold over men. To all appearance, although he was always classed with the Jacobins, nobody appeared more closely connected with Bonaparte, as he had married Désirée Clary, Joseph's sister-in-law. Yet nobody was less to be relied upon than this quasi-relative. He did not forget that he could have seized power when a Minister. Would he consent to help another to seize it ? " ¹

Ten days passed before the brothers Joseph and Lucien Bonaparte succeeded in bringing Napoleon and Bernadotte together. Meanwhile the two men heard and talked much about each other. Bernadotte is found trying to persuade General Moreau to join him in preventing " the deserter from Egypt " from destroying the Republic, and telling a friend ² that " the Corsican " was bent on overthrowing the Republic, but that he (Bernadotte) " knew his duty." ³ On the other hand, Napoleon is found expressing astonishment when he heard that Bernadotte, when Minister of War, had rejected his opportunities of seizing power, and contrasting him with Moreau and the rest :

" Bernadotte," said Napoleon, " has Moorish blood in his veins. He is bold and enterprising. He is allied to my brothers. He does not like me, and I am almost certain that he will oppose me. . . . This devil of a fellow is not to be seduced. He is disinterested and clever." ⁴

Ten days passed before Bernadotte, yielding to pressure from the Bonaparte family, was induced to call upon Napoleon, who took the opportunity of expatiating upon the deplorable position of France. Bernadotte bridled up and poured forth a vehement defence of his own ministry and of its results. He concluded with a sarcastic reference to the Army of Egypt :

¹ Vandal, i, 280, 281.

² The famous French artist, Pierre Guérin.

³ *Intermédiaire des Chercheurs*, vii. 182, 282 ; cf. Pingaud, 44.

⁴ Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, 3rd ed., iii. 42-44. Bourrienne was Napoleon's secretary. As regards his Memoirs see p. 380, *post*.

"Although," he said, "we must regard that army as lost, or at least as not likely to return except under the shadow of a treaty,¹ I do not despair of the Republic, and I am convinced that she will resist her enemies, both domestic and foreign."²

Napoleon winced at the reference to the *domestic* enemies of the Republic, and Josephine tactfully changed the conversation.

At a second interview Napoleon taunted Bernadotte with his political association with the so-called "Jacobins," and added: "I will tell you plainly, General, I should prefer to live wild in the woods than in a state of society which affords no security." "My God," replied Bernadotte, "what security would you have?" Before he could proceed, Josephine once more intervened and turned the tide of conversation into a less dangerous channel.³

Their next meeting was by chance at the Théâtre Français, when Napoleon proposed to breakfast with Bernadotte next day. Bernadotte could not say "no"; and Napoleon whispered jauntily to his secretary: "This will compromise him with Gohier." Next morning Désirée prepared a sumptuous *déjeuner* which she said playfully was "to make General Bonaparte forget the delights of Egypt." The breakfast party adjourned to Joseph Bonaparte's country house, where were assembled the leaders of Napoleon's fellow-conspirators. When Bernadotte saw groups gathering mysteriously, conversing with animation, but becoming silent when he approached, he could not help perceiving that some mischief was brewing.⁴

Napoleon invited Bernadotte and Jourdan to dinner on the 16th Brumaire (6th November). They accepted the invitation in ignorance that they were on the brink of a *coup d'état*. At the table there was a lively debate

¹ This prophecy was verified. The Army of Egypt was forced to evacuate Egypt in August 1801, under an agreement with England and Turkey.

² *Note Historique sur le 18^e Brumaire* (Swedish Archives).

³ Bourrienne, iii. 47, 52; Pingaud, 42-44.

⁴ Bourrienne, iii. 52, 53; Sarrazin, *Mém.*, 130, 131; *Guerres Civiles*, 423.

upon the subject of the relative advantages of defensive and aggressive campaigns. Napoleon advocated aggressive warfare because it developed a concentration of force, while a defensive campaign involved the dispersion of troops along a wide extent of frontier. Bernadotte took the opposite side, and concluded by observing sarcastically that it was "easier to invade territory than to hold it."

After dinner Napoleon tried to damage Bernadotte by bantering him for being "a Chouan," which was a slang term for a Royalist. Probably he was alluding to the rumour that Bernadotte had, when Minister of War, been willing to facilitate the escape of the Duc d'Enghien from Paris. Bernadotte retorted: "You should be consistent, General. A few days ago you accused me of favouring the Jacobins. Now you accuse me of protecting the Chouans. The contradiction is too obvious."¹

Napoleon's *coup d'état* required two days for its accomplishment.² On the first day a packed gathering of the Legislature passed a decree transferring its sittings from Paris to the comparative seclusion of the suburban palace of St. Cloud, and appointed Napoleon Bonaparte to the command of the Guard of the Council of Ancients and of all the troops in Paris. Joseph Bonaparte assisted in packing the gathering by inviting a number of doubtful deputies to a "*déjeuner* of dupes," thus keeping them away from the Legislative Chamber. On the second day the Legislature was to be persuaded, or, if necessary, to be compelled by military violence, to adopt a new Constitution with Napoleon as its chief. Napoleon relied largely upon the help of his own family. His brother Lucien was the President of the Council of Five Hundred; and he gave the immediate direction of the troops to General Leclerc, who was his brother-in-law, and to General Murat, who was to become his brother-in-law not many weeks afterwards.

¹ Bourrienne, iii. 54-55.

² 8th and 9th November (the 18th and 19th Brumaire, Republican Calendar).

Before the commencement of these well-devised proceedings, when Napoleon's fellow-conspirators were assembling at his house, Bernadotte came by invitation in mufti and without knowing what was on the tapis. A conversation ensued which can best be appreciated in dialogue form ¹ :

" *Napoleon*. You are not in uniform.

" *Bernadotte*. I am not on duty.

" *Napoleon*. But you soon will be.

" *Bernadotte*. I think not.

" *Napoleon* (drawing him aside). The Directory is governing badly. It will ruin the Republic unless we set it to rights. The Council of Ancients has appointed me Commandant of Paris, of the National Guard, and of all the troops of the Metropolitan Division. Go, put on your uniform, and rejoin me at the Tuileries.

" *Bernadotte*. No. I cannot do as you wish.

" *Napoleon*. Ah ! I see how it is. You think you can count upon Moreau and the other generals ! You are mistaken. You will see them all come to me, even Moreau.

" *Bernadotte*. I do not wish to take part in a rebellion or to upset a Constitution cemented with the blood of so many men.

" *Napoleon*. Very well, stay here until I have received the decree of the Council of Ancients.

" *Bernadotte* (raising his voice and brandishing his sword-case). I am a man who may be killed but who cannot be detained against his will.

" *Napoleon*. Well, promise me at all events that you will not undertake anything against me.

" *Bernadotte*. Yes, as citizen I promise.

" *Napoleon*. What do you mean by ' as citizen ' ?

" *Bernadotte*. I mean that I shall not *of my own initiative* go to the barracks to harangue the soldiers, or to any public places to excite the National Guard or the people. But, if the Directory calls on me, or if the Legislative Body gives me the command of their Guard, I

¹ *Note Historique* ; Barras, iv. 81-83 ; Vandal, i, 306 ; Pingaud, 45. 46 ; Bourr., iii. 169 ; *Bourrienne et ses erreurs* throws some doubt upon the details of hour and place, but there can be no doubt that the conversation took place.

shall be prepared to take the field against those who may seek to overthrow the existing Constitution.

“*Napoleon.* Oh, I feel quite easy in that case. I have taken every precaution, and you will not receive any such command. They fear your ambition more than mine. Besides, believe me that my only wish is to save the Republic. I want nothing for myself. I shall retire to Malmaison and surround myself with the society of my friends. If you wish to be one of the number you will be very welcome.

“*Bernadotte.* Good friendship is possible, but I believe that you will always be the most imperious of masters.”

Bernadotte walked away and kept his side of the bargain. He refrained from availing himself of the opportunities which occurred of haranguing his old officers and men ; but he offered to mount his horse if the Council of Five Hundred would appoint him commander of their guards and summon him to defend the Constitution.

Bonaparte made one more effort to win him over by sending General Sarrazin with another invitation and a promise of welcome. Bernadotte replied that he had formed his resolution, and that he would “prefer to be cut in pieces rather than to contribute to enslave his country.” He told Sarrazin not to mention the name of Bonaparte, who, in his eyes, was “the Cromwell of France.”¹

Napoleon, however, was satisfied. “I have no fear,” he said to his confidants, “that Bernadotte will consent to my assassination, but he might harangue the troops, and that is what gives me anxiety.” He saw clearly where the danger lay. He was himself a *mauvais harangueur*,² and he had no general with him who was Bernadotte’s equal in that respect. Here lay Bernadotte’s strength, and if he had dared to use it resolutely he might have changed the course of events.

At 5 a.m. on the morning of the 19th Brumaire Generals Jourdan and Augereau, with some leading deputies of

¹ Sarrazin, *Mém.*, 133 ; *Phil.*, ii. 206.

² Vandal, i. 317.



BONAPARTE AND BERNADOTTE.
Who met for the first time in March 1797.

the Council of Five Hundred, repaired to Bernadotte's house in order to ascertain what he was prepared to do in order to resist the threatened overthrow of the Constitution. Bernadotte refused to take any action without a decree from the Legislature. It had been the same on the 18th Fructidor and on the 30th Prairial.¹ He shrank from drawing his sword without some constitutional sanction.

"Send me such a decree," said Bernadotte; "twenty minutes after its receipt I shall be with my aides-de-camp in your midst, I shall take command of the corps I meet on my path, and we shall then see what there is to be done. If it is necessary to proclaim Bonaparte an outlaw, you will have at your side a general, and at the very least a great portion of the troops."²

The conference broke up, and the deputies left for St. Cloud, while Bernadotte remained in Paris, agitated, irresolute, and waiting upon events.

While Bernadotte was waiting for a command to come from the clouds, Napoleon was making history at St. Cloud. The Legislative Councils showed themselves unwieldy instruments of revolution. So Napoleon himself visited them with the object of persuading them to commit their destinies to him. But his addresses were ineffective, and he extricated himself with difficulty from the Council of Five Hundred, where the deputies greeted him with threats of outlawry. During the uproar, Bernadotte's name was used as a rallying cry, and shouts of "Bernadotte" were heard above the din.³

It was at this point that a military leader might have rallied the Guards of the Directory and of the Councils to defend their masters. So says Lavalette, Napoleon's aide-de-camp, who was in the *mêlée*. Sieyès, who was watching the troops from a window, became nervous. Thibaudeau, who was an eye-witness, was of opinion that "if Generals Jourdan, Augereau and Bernadotte had been present and had been backed by a decree of out-

¹ See pp. 57 and 96 *ante*.

² *Note Historique*; Vandal, i. 342.

³ Sorel, v. 482.

lawry against Napoleon from the Council of Five Hundred, the Guards would probably have given effect to the decree."¹

But these generals were not on the spot, and it was Lucien Bonaparte, as President of the Council of Five Hundred, who gave the signal for the sword to intervene. The call was responded to by Generals Leclerc and Murat, who with their soldiers quickly cleared the palace of the deputies, driving them pell-mell into the gardens through doors and windows.

It remained for Lucien Bonaparte, who was said to have acted "twenty parts in one day," to give the finishing touch. A remnant of the *corps législatif* sanctioned a new Constitution, and nominated a provisional Consulate, consisting of Napoleon Bonaparte, Sieyès and Roger Ducos, to form the new Executive. The *coup* had come off. The curtain had descended. "*La farce est jouée*," said Réal, one of the well-informed actors in the piece.²

That evening Napoleon told Josephine and his secretary that he had been informed of all Bernadotte's proceedings.

"All this, General," said his secretary, "should give you an idea how inflexible his principles are." "Yes, I am well aware of it," said Napoleon, "he is honest. But for his obstinacy, my brothers would have brought him over. They are allied with him. As for me, have I not, I ask you, made sufficient advances to him? You have witnessed them. However, I am thinking of separating him from his coteries without anyone being able to find fault with the proceeding. I cannot revenge myself in any other manner. Joseph likes him. I should have them all against me. These family considerations are follies! Good night, Bourrienne. By the way, we shall sleep at the Luxembourg to-morrow."³

Family considerations also influenced Bernadotte, who, some years afterwards, in a letter to Lucien Bonaparte, expressed his regret for having yielded to them. After

¹ Thibaudeau, 6; Vandal, i. 380-382.

² Vandal, i. 387-401.

³ Bourrienne, iii. 106-108.

reproaching Lucien with having failed in his duty on the 19th Brumaire, he went on to say :

“ But have I any right to reproach you for not having imitated the grand models of patriotism of which history gives us examples, since I was found wanting also ? Why ? Because Joseph is the husband of Julie, who is the sister of my wife, Désirée. On such trifles depend the destinies of a great empire.”¹

The invariable sequel of a *coup d'état* was the immediate proscription of the most prominent of the defeated party. On the 19th Brumaire seventy of the Council of Five Hundred were declared to be expelled from that body. On that night Napoleon's police, under the direction of Fouché, were searching Paris for the leaders of the opposition. Paul Barras fled and was destined never again to return to public life. Some were arrested ; but the majority were careful not to be at home. For example, General Jourdan took refuge at the house of a friend.

What of Bernadotte ? He had been the acknowledged leader of the opposition. When Napoleon had landed at Fréjus the Republicans had proposed that Bernadotte should arrest him for deserting his army and for breaking the quarantine laws. On the 19th Brumaire he had offered, if appointed commander of the guard of the Council of Five Hundred, to execute a decree of outlawry against the ambitious Corsican. Many a man, after one of the “ days ” of the revolutionary era, had gone to the scaffold or to a penal colony for far less than Bernadotte had said and done. Paris was seething with political passion, and the cauldron must have time to cool.

Of Bernadotte's doings on the evening of the 19th Brumaire we have the most direct evidence. General Sarrazin gives the following account of what met his eyes when he returned home after the *coup d'état* :

¹ *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, ii. 445.

“ My astonishment was excessive when, arriving in the evening at my country house, called Château Fraguier, near Villeneuve St. George, I found Bernadotte and a little youth, whom I did not recollect at first sight, and whom I found to be Madame Bernadotte in boy's clothes. The general told me that they had determined to come to me, in the first place, because they were sure I would keep their secret ; and because, my château being contiguous to the forest of Senart, it was easy for them to conceal themselves there. I thanked him for having given me the preference, and assured him that his confidence would be amply justified.” ¹

While Napoleon was taking possession of the Luxembourg Palace, the Bernadottes were fugitives from his police. They had experienced a sudden change of fortune. Désirée became more unhappy and homesick every day. “ When shall we have the pleasure of embracing our dear Oscar ? The poor child loves us so much ; he must pine at being so long without us.”

Bernadotte must have been a prey to bitter chagrin and disappointment. The historian, Albert Sorel, considers that he might have been a successful aspirant to supreme power in France “ if it had not been for his caution in waiting for power to come to him instead of seizing it when the opportunity offered.” ² The Director Gohier believed that if he had continued to be Minister of War he might have prevented the *coup d'état* of Brumaire.³ In that case he would have been invested with that legal authority without which he was never disposed to take a political initiative. For the moment he had received a knock-out blow ; and his career seemed to be at an end. On the 17th Brumaire he had been, next to Napoleon, the foremost soldier-statesman of the Republic. On the 20th he was a fugitive in hiding.

¹ Sarrazin, *Mém.*, 134 ; *Phil.*, ii. 205, 206.

² Sorel, iv. 473 *et seq.*

³ Gohier, i. 227.

PART III
*THE CONSULATE*¹

1800-1804

¹ This period has been treated in greater detail in *Bernadotte and Napoleon* (John Murray, London), chapters i-xiii, pp. 1-84.

CHAPTER XIII

A PERIOD OF CHAGRIN AND DISAPPOINTMENT

1800-1801

As the *coup d'état* had been carried out by trickery and violence, Bernadotte, from the point of view of strict legality, had been on the right side in opposing it. Yet France was so sick of the Directory that she was content to shut her eyes to the illegality and to heave a sigh of relief. She was soon to discover that she had slipped her neck out of one collar only to exchange it for another.

Napoleon immediately applied himself to the framing of a new Constitution. He appropriated Sieyès' pretentious theories, and moulded them into a centralised system in which he was himself to be the real autocrat. For this purpose he borrowed the title of Consul from the Republic of ancient Rome and gave it to three chief magistrates of the new State. The new Constitution is known to history as the Consulate; and Bernadotte lived under it for the next four years.

Under the Consular Constitution all real power was vested in the First Consul. The Second and Third Consuls acted only as his advisers and assistants. The First Consul was to hold office for ten years and to have the power of appointment of Ministers, Ambassadors, and all the principal officers of State. To Napoleon Bonaparte the post of First Consul fell by right of personal pre-eminence as well as by right of political conquest.

As the Legislature was subordinated to the Executive, and as the Executive was concentrated in the hands of the First Consul, the Constitution amounted to veiled absolutism. Nevertheless, it remained republican in theory, and Napoleon called into existence three parlia-

mentary chambers. They were given the popular titles of the Senate, the Legislative Body and the Tribunate. But the deputies were not freely elected. They were carefully chosen by an ingenious system of selection.

The First Consul had no illusions about these Assemblies. He tolerated them on condition that they were to remain mere caricatures of that system of popular representation in which he had no belief. This mock Parliament was the scaffolding behind which he was building up his own dictatorship.

Meanwhile, for the purpose of the practical business of government, he devised a fourth body, which became his favourite branch of the Constitution. This was the Council of State, in which all legislation and administration was to be initiated, with the result that it quickly assumed the place of the real workshop of the Consulate. It included the Consuls, the Ministers and some forty nominated members.¹

While laying the foundations of absolute power Napoleon took care to veil his personal aims by publicly taking a solemn oath "to be faithful to the Republic." It was on the day upon which Napoleon proclaimed his fidelity to the Republic that the Bernadottes left their place of refuge and returned to their home in the Rue Cisalpine. They had been advised to do so by Joseph Bonaparte.

The success of the *coup d'état* had been signalled by an order for the deportation to a penal colony of more than fifty of the opposition, including General Jourdan. When the storm of passion had subsided Napoleon proceeded to conciliate the defeated Republicans. A general amnesty was declared. Generals Jourdan and Augereau received high commands.

Napoleon now offered Bernadotte a seat on the Council of State. Joseph, when advising him to accept, was able to point out that the Consulate was a *fait accompli*, that Napoleon had sworn allegiance to the Republic, and that Bernadotte's own comrades had accepted posts.

Bernadotte did not dissociate himself from the members

¹ *Napoléon au Conseil d'État*, par St. Hilaire.

of the late Government. He kept up friendly relations with the Ex-Director, Gohier, who, having been imprisoned and expelled from office, remained under the surveillance of Napoleon's police. In April, we find the new Councillor of State inviting Gohier to dinner in a note in which he holds out, as an inducement, that they will have an opportunity of "chatting about the ingratitude of men (*ils jaseront un instant sur l'ingratitude des hommes*)."¹

He maintained his intimacy with Napoleon's brothers and sisters. Joseph and he were on brotherly terms. At the marriage of Caroline Bonaparte to General Murat, which took place soon after the *coup d'état*,² Bernadotte acted as Murat's best man and as the principal witness to the marriage register.

Lucien Bonaparte, who had contributed more than any single man to the success of the *coup d'état*, was disappointed at its results. So entirely did he sympathise with Bernadotte's impatience at Napoleon's domineering personality that they were suspected by Talleyrand and others of conspiring together against the First Consul.³ The following extract from a letter from Bernadotte to Lucien contains an interesting allusion to the *coup d'état* of Brumaire.

"Your friends and mine say that you were guilty of weakness or of complicity with your brother. But I know that on the 19th Brumaire you only acted a fraternal part, when you ought to have had the courage to put to the vote, in your capacity of President of the Council of Five Hundred, the outlawry of that brother who violated by force of arms the national representation. Yes, you betrayed your duty and your republican conscience because nobody knows better than you that the decree of outlawry was deserved."⁴

¹ *Revue des Autographs*, Charavay, No. 50, p. 11.

² 18th January, 1800; *Joachim Murat*, 453-455.

³ *Mémoires de Thibaudeau*, 1799-1815, 22, 23; *Miot de Melito* (Eng. Tr.) i. 323.

⁴ *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, ii. 445.

He adds in the same letter that he had made up his mind to make the best of the Consular Republic ; and he appears to have done so until Napoleon began to drop the republican mask.

It was not until after his followers had been amnestied, and his political colleagues, Jourdan and Augereau, had accepted military commands that Bernadotte accepted a seat in the War Section of the Council of State, and was selected as one of the Councillors of State who were to present to the Legislature the result of an overwhelming plebiscite in favour of the New Constitution.¹ He appears to have discharged the duty without enthusiasm, but in a manner which did not give rise to any complaint.

Bernadotte soon saw himself revenged upon the ex-Director Sieyès. Sieyès had got rid of Bernadotte from the Ministry of War in order to facilitate a *coup d'état*. Bernadotte now saw Napoleon get rid of Sieyès in order to clear the decks for his own predominance. The ex-abbé had falsified his reputation as a constitution-maker by contributing little to the new order of things except what he called the principle of "absorption."

This principle was a mere device by which dangerous and ambitious men were to be "absorbed" by receiving dignified places in a nominated Legislature. Napoleon accepted the principle, and immediately applied it to Sieyès, who was "absorbed" by receiving a Senatorship, a large sum of money, and the splendid national estate of Chroné. The ex-abbé thenceforward lost all his mysterious prestige and influence, and earned the contemptuous nickname of "the Canon of Chroné."

When Sieyès heard that Bernadotte had accepted a seat in the Council of State he was heard to remark sententiously "*C'est l'absorber.*" Bernadotte was of the same opinion. We find him, at a later period, writing to Lucien Bonaparte :

"Your monk Sieyès conceived the idea of what he called 'absorption,' a sort of metaphysical notion, which

¹ *Journal de Paris*, An VIII (1800), vol. 45, 622, 630.

he designed in order to prevent a popular leader from aspiring to power. But General Bonaparte willed otherwise. In truth, instead of Bonaparte being absorbed, it is we poor soldiers who have been literally absorbed. As a result, there will be no more glory except near him, by him, and unfortunately for him. I wonder what the Canon of Chroné thinks of it.”¹

This intimate letter, written to Napoleon’s brother, breathes a spirit not of personal hatred, but of resentment against a dictatorship which leaves no glory except a reflected one for any other soldier. Bernadotte wrote and talked in the same sense to his friends and intimates ; and Napoleon, from time to time, was informed of his gasconades.

That the First Consul was resolved to “absorb” Bernadotte became evident. He received from the First Consul, three months after the establishment of the Consulate, the offer of the highest and most confidential command that was in his gift. This was the command of an army which was destined for the next Italian campaign. The First Consul was debarred by the new Constitution from commanding an army while it was within the borders of the Republic, and Bernadotte was to be his immediate deputy with the title of “Lieutenant of the First Consul.” Napoleon, who wished to identify Bernadotte with his new Constitution in the most public way, assumed his acceptance of the offer, and his appointment was announced in the Parisian papers of 12th March 1800.²

Bernadotte was attracted by what seemed a more glorious opportunity. There were rumours of an English invasion which was to concentrate upon the coast of Brittany. He preferred the chance of defending France from an invader to the task of playing second fiddle to the new Cæsar. The command of the Army of the West had become vacant by the retirement of General

¹ *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, ii. 445.

² *La Clef du Cabinet*, 12th March, 1800 (22nd Ventôse, An VIII).

Brune. So Bernadotte, with a *beau geste*, offered "his sword for the defence of the Fatherland" to the First Consul, who promptly took him at his word, and appointed him commander-in-chief of the Army of the West with 40,000 troops and headquarters at Rennes.¹

This step seems to have been an error of judgment. He missed taking part in the Italian campaign, and in the battle of Marengo; and he gained no glory in the Army of the West. Except for a descent for a few hours of a small force at Quiberon, there was no English invasion. Instead of defending the fatherland, Bernadotte found himself called upon to suppress a civil war in the royalist district of La Vendée. This was an odious duty to be thrown upon a soldier. Nobody knew its odiousness better than Napoleon, who wrote to General Brune on his retirement: "Of all the public employments the one which you have filled in the last three months is the most painful (*de toutes les missions la plus pénible*)."²

Painful indeed was Bernadotte's task, especially in view of the savage instructions which were sent him by Napoleon, who had no mercy for rebels against his authority, and was infuriated at the resistance which was offered by the heroic peasant leader of the Vendéans, Georges Cadoudal. "Seize that wretch Georges Cadoudal, dead or alive." "Have the miserable Georges hunted and shot within twenty-four hours." "Seize him and shoot him." "Rid us of the miserable Georges."³ Such were the peremptory orders which the First Consul sent to the commander-in-chief of the Western Army.

Bernadotte, so says General Sarrazin, was "as rigid in maintaining discipline as he was attentive in healing the wounds occasioned by civil war."⁴ Two other writers, Bourrienne and Thibaudeau, give him credit for having by a "happy mixture of prudence and firmness" put "a finishing touch to the pacification of the West."⁵

¹ *La Clef du Cabinet*, 30th Germinal, An VIII (19th April, 1800).

² *Corr. de Nap.*, 4719.

³ *Corr. de Nap.*, 4877, 4968, 4974, 4991.

⁴ Sarrazin, *Phil.*, ii. 206.

⁵ Bourrienne, v. 4; Thibaudeau, i. 166.

While Bernadotte was engaged in his inglorious employment in Brittany, he received a remarkable message from the First Consul, who was leaving France to take command of the Army of Italy in the coming campaign. It was published as a sort of manifesto :

“ I am going to fling myself once more into the hazards of war. We do not know how it may turn out. If I fall, you will find yourself with 40,000 men at the gates of Paris. In your hands will be the fate of the Republic.”¹

This message showed a surprising confidence in the reliability of the man who had so recently stood publicly in his path and was widely suspected of being his enemy. It reminds us of Napoleon's remark on the night of the 19th Brumaire : “ He is honest.”²

Perhaps Napoleon was thinking of his family, who would be safe under Bernadotte's wing in the event of a disaster to himself. In that event they ran great risks. We find Lucien writing afterwards to Joseph : “ As for us, if the battle of Marengo had closed the First Consul's career we should now have been proscribed.” In the contingency of an accident to Napoleon, Bernadotte would have been his best possible successor from the point of view of the safety of the Bonaparte family.

The Italian campaign ended triumphantly with the decisive victory of Marengo, which drove Paris mad with joy, and had the effect of consolidating Napoleon's authority, and of enhancing his popularity. It also rendered him less disposed to humour or conciliate men of independent character like Bernadotte. On his return he questioned his familiars as to the persons who, when rumours of disaster had been circulated, had been designated by public opinion as his probable successors, and he learnt that Bernadotte's name was in the list.

Napoleon next proposed to nominate Bernadotte to the command of an army which was destined for the renewal of the war in Italy. The appointment was

¹ Sarrans, i. 42.

² See p. 116, *ante*.

announced in the newspapers,¹ but had to be cancelled because of the indignant protest of General Murat, who was Napoleon's brother-in-law. Bernadotte was Murat's friend and had recently been his "best man" at his marriage; but professional rivalry overcame friendship.

Murat wrote to Joseph Bonaparte, "Upon the day that Bernadotte is preferred to me, I shall hand in my resignation. I shall never endure tranquilly the spectacle of power passing into the hands of the man who on the 18th Brumaire was on the side of those who voted outlawry against our Family."²

This protest, coming from a brother-in-law to whom Napoleon was under recent obligations, destroyed Bernadotte's chances and relegated him once more to the ignominious police duties of the Western Command.

Persistent rumours that Napoleon was contemplating an invasion of England, and was collecting an army in Flanders for that purpose, now reached Bernadotte at his headquarters at Rennes. He at once wrote to the First Consul:

"I beg of you to remember that my eagerness to repair to Brest last year lost me the command of the Army of Italy. I hope that your good intention will not be frustrated in respect of the command which you have been so kind as to promise me."³

The chagrin and bitter vexation of spirit from which Bernadotte was suffering is reflected in a letter to Lucien Bonaparte in which he wrote:

"if my hope [i.e. of the command of the Army of England] is disappointed, I shall depart for our dominions across the seas, in order to seek the happiness which is denied me in my own country by men who owe me justice and recognition."⁴

¹ *La Clef du Cabinet*, 7th Brum., An IX (29th Oct. 1800), *Journal des Débats*, 8th Brum. (30th Oct.)

² *Corr. de Murat*, 32, 33.

³ *Bourrienne et ses erreurs*, 220, 227.

⁴ *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, iii. 106, 107.

When the rumours of an invasion of England were silenced by the signature of the preliminaries of the Peace of Amiens, Bernadotte's ambition turned to the command of an expedition which was to re-establish French authority in Santo Domingo, that prosperous French colony in the West Indies which stood to France in the same sort of relation as India stands to the British Empire to-day. The expedition was expected to rival the glory of Napoleon's famous campaign in Egypt. Great was Bernadotte's disappointment when he was supplanted by another of Napoleon's brothers-in-law, who was reaping the reward of his services on the 19th Brumaire.

This was General Leclerc, who, with his beautiful wife Pauline, were the guests of Bernadotte in Brittany on their way to the port of embarkation. On this occasion an animated scene occurred in the course of which Bernadotte gave free vent to his annoyance in forcible terms which were reported by Leclerc to Napoleon.¹

One of the consequences of the Peace of Amiens was the dissolution of the Army of the West. Bernadotte's painful mission was at an end, and he was recalled to Paris. His farewell Order of the Day gave offence to the First Consul because of a reference to the "inspiration of liberty" which Napoleon took as a reflection upon his own advance to absolutism.

Probably it was this Order of the Day, coupled with General Leclerc's report of what Bernadotte had said to him, that led Napoleon to say angrily to his brother Joseph: "Be well assured that if that wrong-headed Southerner [Bernadotte] continues to rail against my Government, instead of giving him the command which he seeks, I shall have him shot in the Square of Carrousel." "Is that a message?" said Joseph. "No, it is a hint," said Napoleon.²

Nevertheless, Napoleon offered the "wrong-headed

¹ *Napoléon et sa famille*, ii. 92. Leclerc died of yellow fever in Santo Domingo in 1802.

² *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, ii. 107-108.

Southerner " the Ambassadorship to Constantinople, and, when he refused to return to diplomacy, the Captain-Generalship of Guadeloupe.¹ The following is the letter to his brother Joseph, in which Napoleon conveyed his offer of the command in Guadeloupe to Bernadotte. It is evident from its contents that Napoleon had not yet given up the idea of conquest in the New World.

" MY DEAR JOSEPH,—I think General Bernadotte has gone to Amiens. Whether he is there or not, I wish you would find out whether he would like to go to Guadeloupe as captain-general. . . . It is an important mission, and agreeable from every point of view. There is glory to be won, and a great service to be rendered to the Republic in reducing that island to permanent order. Besides, Guadeloupe is a base from which possession can be taken of Louisiana and also of Martinique and of St. Lucia. If this tempts Bernadotte's ambitions let me know at once, because the expedition will go in Pluviôse (21st January—19th February) and these colonial missions are sought after by the generals of the highest reputation.

" BONAPARTE." ¹

The secret reports received by the British Foreign Office in the winter of 1801 refer to the expected appointment of Bernadotte to the command of Guadeloupe, and attribute it to Bonaparte's desire to rid himself of a rival by giving him a distant employment.² Guadeloupe, however, was an islet which did not tempt Bernadotte's ambition, and the post fell to General Richepanse, who fell a victim to yellow fever a few months afterwards.

Bernadotte now saw the principal commands going to other generals, and was by no means consoled when Napoleon allowed him to retain the rank of commander-in-chief without giving him any opportunity of distinction. In the winter of 1801, after two years of the consulate, he was a thoroughly disappointed and discontented man.

¹ *Corr. de Nap.*, 5916; *Roi Joseph*, i. 215.

² F.O., 27/58 (letter endorsed " secret intelligence ").



MADAME JOSEPH BONAPARTE (Julie Clary).
Queen of Naples (1806). Queen of Spain (1808).



JOSEPH BONAPARTE.
King of Naples (1806). King of Spain (1808).

CHAPTER XIV

BERNADOTTE'S PRIVATE LIFE

1800-1801

LET us turn aside from the disappointments and mortifications which marked this stage of Bernadotte's career, in order to catch some glimpse of his private life. The Bernadottes occupied a *maisonnette* in the Rue Cisalpine in the outskirts of Paris. This was the home of the general, of Désirée, and of Oscar, who was now two years old. The general divided his time between his home and his headquarters in Brittany. When he was in Brittany, Désirée stayed with her sister, Madame Joseph Bonaparte, at her château of Morfontaine, where the social atmosphere was gay and cultured.

Some letters of Bernadotte's addressed to his wife from Brittany have been preserved. They are full of confidences about the little Oscar, of loving messages, of banter about her admirers,¹ and of advice to be happy and gay. Their tone is tender and affectionate, sometimes just a little paternal, for he was the elder by fourteen years. He was anxious to see her shine in society, and is found urging her to pursue that self-education which he practised himself. Here is the conclusion of one letter :

"Since I left home I have not received a line from you. . . . I shall become jealous if you continue to be so neglectful. . . . I wish you plenty of gaiety. My love for you will last as long as my existence."

In a postscript he adds : "I am curious to know what masters you have engaged."² Here is a scrap from another letter which is to the same effect :

¹ Admiral Truguet and M. Chiappe.

² *Désirée Clary*, par d'Amaillé, 96 (6th May, 1801).

“ I am delighted (*Je suis aux anges*) to hear that you have at last decided to take dancing lessons. You will please me much by going on with your music lessons. Then you will be divine. Good-bye, my dear little one, I embrace you as I love you and that is very tenderly.”¹

Let us proceed to pry into some other letters from Bernadotte to Désirée, which speak for themselves :

“ MY LOVE,—I long to know, my darling, if you have decided to wean Oscar. He seems to me to be old enough to bear the change. But you are fully at liberty to take whatever course your short experience and your affection for him tell you is best. The wish to preserve unblemished his sweet little face should make you think of vaccination, but on this point, as on the last one, do what you think best. I am under obligations to Admiral Truguet. He acts like an obliging colleague. He is a handsome, agreeable bachelor, worthy to be the escort of a charming young lady. It is folly to torment yourself. You are young and should amuse yourself. My affection and my advice should make you reasonable. The springtime of life passes like a shadow, and the winter with its icicles overtakes us only too soon. If Bonaparte does not send me to Flanders, I shall remind him of his promise, and, if nothing unforeseen happens, you can come to me for a month. In spite of my desire to see you, I am very anxious that you should give the finishing touches to your education. Accomplishments such as dancing and music are very essential. I recommend some lessons from M. Montel. I perceive that I am giving you too much advice, so I stop and kiss you on the lips. Your lover, J. BERNADOTTE.”²

Bernadotte's next letter returns to the subject of his wife's education :

“ You do not say anything of your progress in dancing, music and other accomplishments. When I am far away I like to know that my little one is benefiting by the lessons she is taking. Good-bye, I kiss you on the eyes ;

¹ *Désirée Clary*, par d'Amaillé, 98 (14th May, 1801).

² *Ib.*, 100 (26th May, 1801).

do the same to Oscar from me. Your lover, J. BERNADOTTE.”¹

Désirée seems to have been piqued by her husband's importunities upon the subject of self-culture, and to have given expression to her feelings, for we find him writing :

“ I have yet to know, my dear Désirée, what there was that was severe in my letter of which you complain. I had no other thought than to speak the language of a sincere and true lover. I do not wish to treat you like a child, but as a loving and sensible wife. All that I say should give you that assurance. I think as you do about the accomplishments. They are acquired slowly, and the effort is irksome. Nevertheless, with a little patience and determination one can succeed, when one has not passed one's fifth lustre. Write me and tell me that you love me. I embrace you tenderly. J. B.”²

Thenceforward Bernadotte seems to have given up the idea of stimulating Désirée to be ambitious for social distinction.³ For himself, he steadily devoted himself to self-improvement both by the study of books and by the employment of competent teachers. He always seemed to be preparing himself for some higher destiny.

Bernadotte's wish that Désirée should excel in accomplishments was quickened by his intimacy with the two most famous and gifted women of that time—Madame de Staël and Madame Récamier.

Madame de Staël was the very opposite of Désirée. She was a brilliant writer who dabbled in politics. She was an admirer of the political ideas which were embodied in the Constitutions of Great Britain and of the United States of America. This was enough to render her the object of Napoleon's suspicion and disfavour. He once said of her that people always

¹ *Désirée Clary*, par d'Amaillé, 102 (28th May, 1801).

² *Ib.*, 103 (7th June, 1801).

³ He was successful in encouraging her to cultivate music; see p. 331, *post.*

left her house less attached to him than when they entered it.

Madame de Staël presided over a *salon* which was half literary and half political. She resembled Queen Elizabeth in being at once feminine in her feelings and masculine in mind. Her influence over her social circle is thus described by Lacratelle, who was one of them. "One lived in an atmosphere of enthusiasm near her, so thoroughly did her eloquence irradiate the dullest subject and animate the most frigid listener. It flashed forth in sallies. It was impossible successfully to resist her."

With a wealth of wit and sarcasm she encouraged Bernadotte's rising resentment at Napoleon's usurpation of power. The discontented Gascon was not a frigid listener, and he made no effort to resist her advocacy of views which were already his own. Their friendship was displeasing to Napoleon.

Madame de Staël never wavered in her admiration for Bernadotte. She once described him as "the true hero of the age"; and she once wrote to him, when she was in exile, "thy fiery glance is my fatherland." He was her beau-ideal of a soldier-statesman. Metternich observed that all her portraits of her contemporaries were true to the life except that of Bernadotte.¹ But, if Madame de Staël had a predilection for Bernadotte, Metternich was prejudiced against him. The Austrian aristocrat could never reconcile himself to the spectacle of a *parvenu* of the Revolution climbing to the topmost rung.

It was in 1801 that Bernadotte made the acquaintance of Madame Récamier. She had none of Madame de Staël's literary gifts and political predilections. She was queen of another world, in which she had no rival; for she was the reigning beauty of Paris and the most graceful and charming Frenchwoman of her time. Her intimate friendship with Bernadotte had its origin in a romantic incident, as a result of which he became one of her brilliant circle, and she became his ideal of perfect womanhood.

¹ *Mémoires de Metternich*, iii. 476.

One evening in February 1801 Bernadotte had accompanied Napoleon's sisters Eliza and Pauline to the Théâtre Français. During the play Madame Récamier suddenly entered the box in great distress, seeking Eliza Bonaparte's help on behalf of her father, who had been arrested on a treasonable charge and was lodged in the terrible Temple prison. Bernadotte, touched by her distress, offered to intercede with the Government, and succeeded in obtaining her father's discharge.

Madame Récamier, in her *souvenirs*,¹ describes how Bernadotte's "large dark eyes" were fixed on her "with deep interest and compassion," and how his encouraging words reassured and consoled her. She then concludes her account of the incident :

" He left for the Tuileries, promising to bring me word the same evening, whatever answer he might receive. . . . I counted the minutes until his return. He came at last, happy and triumphant. By means of his pressure he had obtained from the First Consul the promise that my father would not be placed on trial, and he hoped, as he said, that he would soon be set at liberty. I wanted words sufficient to thank him. . . . Bernadotte did not abandon the task he had undertaken. One morning he came holding in his hand the Order for my father's release, which he presented to me with that chivalrous grace which characterised him. He asked me, as his only recompense, the favour of accompanying me to the Temple to see the prisoner discharged."

In connection with this incident some of Bernadotte's letters have been preserved which were written in the true spirit of his native Gascony. For example, he tried to interest Joseph Bonaparte in the case by writing of Madame Récamier that she " resembles Venus in beauty and grace, and seems to come down from Olympus in the guise of a suppliant,"² and he assured the lady herself that the " desire with which Madame Récamier inspires

¹ *Souvenirs, etc., de Madame Récamier*, i. 68-102.

² *Catalogue of Morrison Autograph Letters*, ii. 172 ; Herriot's *Madame Récamier*, i. 87.

everyone to be agreeable to her is a guarantee that she can rely upon me, and that I am more entirely at her service than at that of Bernadotte.”¹

Bernadotte now became an *habitué* of Madame Récamier's *salon*, which comprised some of the best of the men of mark of both the old and the new regimes. For example, when Lord and Lady Holland and Charles James Fox came to Paris, they visited her at her country château, where they met “the Count de Narbonne, the brothers de Montmorency, Eugène Beauharnais, Generals Masséna, Moreau, Bernadotte, and Junot.”²

In her circle Madame Récamier reigned like a queen, and lived in a little world of worship and adulation. Eugène Beauharnais always wore, until it was claimed back, a ring which he had begged from Madame Récamier as a charm. General Masséna carried everywhere a ribbon, of which he wrote to her :

“The charming ribbon given by Madame Récamier was worn by General Masséna in all the battles which preceded and followed the siege of Genoa. The general has never been without it, and it has constantly brought about the victory.”³

That Bernadotte was not to be outdone by Masséna as a gallant letter-writer is proved by the following story. The Peace of Amiens enabled Madame Récamier to visit London, where her reputation had preceded her. The Paris newspapers announced her success, and gave currency to rumours that she had sustained some injury, through being mobbed in the streets by crowds of admirers. These rumours elicited the following letter from Bernadotte :

“While the English newspapers have calmed my anxiety about your health, they have made me aware of the danger to which you have been exposed. I blamed the people of London for their excess of zeal, but I must

¹ *Souvenirs de Madame Récamier*, i. 77, 78.

² *Ib.*, i. 95.

³ *Ib.*, i. 55, 56.

confess that I quickly found excuses for them, for I am interested in defending those who are driven to indiscretion by admiration of the charms of your celestial beauty. In the midst of the *éclat* that surrounds you, please deign to remember sometimes that the being who is most devoted to you in the world is

“BERNADOTTE.”¹

In Brittany, Bernadotte's chief of the staff was General Simon, of whom we shall hear again,² and among his officers were Captains Gérard,³ Maison,³ Villatte,⁴ and Maurin.⁴ These were close comrades who were attached to him in many campaigns and employments. Among his aides-de-camp were the brothers Marbot, the younger of whom was the author of the *Mémoires de Marbot*.

Bernadotte, having been an intimate friend of their father, had become guardian of the brothers Marbot. Upon his appointment to the Army of the West, he offered them positions on his staff. The elder was not an active soldier, but a student in a military college. The younger was an Hussar officer on active service. The elder was prompt in presenting himself to Bernadotte, who at once appointed him his aide-de-camp. When the younger arrived, he found himself forestalled, and obliged to accept an extra aide-de-campship, which was, comparatively speaking, an irksome, ill-paid post.

The younger Marbot had refused a place on General Masséna's staff in order to accept one on Bernadotte's. He complained that the latter general had awarded the aide-de-campship to a mere civilian “as if it had been a prize in a race.” Bernadotte appears to have acted on the old maxims *Seniores Priores* and “First come first served.” Young Marbot, however, considered that his own career had been damaged. He took the first opportunity of obtaining a transfer to a cavalry regiment in Spain; and he carried away a grievance

¹ *Souvenirs, etc., de Madame Récamier*, i. 102.

² P. 146, *post*.

³ Afterwards marshals of France.

⁴ Afterwards generals of division.

against Bernadotte of which traces can be observed in his memoirs.

An anecdote, which is illustrative of the ceaseless self-education by which Bernadotte gradually made himself an exceptionally well-informed man, has been told by a gossip writer whose tone is ill-natured. The story is so characteristic of the Gascon temperament that it is likely to have some foundation. It appears that the commander-in-chief studied history and geography under a professor of one of the universities of Brittany.

One evening, at Rennes, the conversation at mess turned upon the island of Malta, which was much in evidence because it had become a bone of contention between France and England. "I'll wager," said the general, "that none of you know the history, geography and statistics of Malta." An aide-de-camp ventured to say that he was aware that Malta was an island in the Mediterranean situated between Sicily and Africa, and that it had once been ruled by an Order of Knights.

"Add," exclaimed Bernadotte with his usual animation, "that it was given to them by Charles V ; that it is eight leagues in length, and five in breadth ; that it is rocky, covered with earth which had to be imported from other countries ; that it is protected by impregnable fortifications ; that it was surrendered to the French in 1798 ; that it is fertile in oranges, lemons, melons, pomegranates, apricots, honey, cotton and variegated mosses ; that it has a population of 8,000 who speak Italian, French, modern Greek and Arabic ; and that its climate is always clear and serene. These, my young friends, are a few elementary facts which I advise you to study."

The aide-de-camp and his brother officers remained stupefied by this display of erudition, until one of them, having to go to the general's apartments, found the explanation in an open book, which had been lent to the general by the local professor and contained all the information that had fallen from the commander-in-chief just as he had repeated it.

The impression which Bernadotte created in general society has been touched upon by the Comtesse de Genlis, who had been Lady-in-Waiting to the Duchess of Orleans and mixed in the social life of both the old and the new regimes. She wrote of him : “ Bernadotte looked astonishingly like the great Condé. His fine appearance, the nobleness of his manners and his politeness aided this resemblance, which he completed in other respects.”¹

Having glanced at Bernadotte’s home life, at the figure which he made in Parisian society, and at his habits of self-improvement, let us return to his public life, and to his adventures in the devious jungle of consular politics, where, at this period, everything was subordinated to Napoleon’s resolute pursuit of supreme power.

¹ Madame de Genlis, *Mémoires* (Eng. Tr.), v. 122.

CHAPTER XV

PLOTS AND CONSPIRACIES—MARC ANTONY AND CÆSAR

1800-1803

FROM the very beginning of the Consulate Bernadotte's name had been mixed up with rumours of conspiracy which need not be taken very seriously. They were the outcome of the recent revolution. Suspicion naturally dogged the "obstacle man" of the *coup d'état* of Brumaire like his shadow.

These rumours were so rife that they crossed the Channel. The English Foreign Office was informed by its spies in 1800 that Bernadotte was likely to be at the head of a republican rising and that he had been heard to say that "he saw no reason why he should not himself play the part of Alexander."¹ At the same time Peltier, an anti-Bonapartist scribe whose writings circulated in England, made a hero of Bernadotte, describing him "as a zealous Jacobin but an enemy of bloodshed who combined a fiery temperament with a heart which was naturally good," and added that "his high-flown imagination was mainly responsible for the extravagance of his political attitude."²

It was in the first year of the Consulate, when Bernadotte was with his army in Brittany, that a conspiracy directed against the life of the First Consul was discovered, in which one of the principal actors was a promising young sculptor named Ceracchi. It was proved at the magisterial inquiry that Ceracchi had stated that he expected to get money from General Bernadotte, and had declared afterwards that he had received money from the

¹ F.O., 27/56 (1800).

² *Paris pendant* 1800, xxxvi. 523, 524.

general.¹ As Bernadotte was in Brittany, inquiries were made of Madame Bernadotte, who stated that Bernadotte had sat to Ceracchi and had paid the sculptor for his bust by sending him a draft upon the War Office for 1,200 francs.

Nobody doubted that Madame Bernadotte's explanation was the true one. The bust was in existence and the fee was a reasonable one. Besides, it passed belief that any sane man would have hired a conspirator to murder the First Consul by means of a draft payable through the War Office. Nevertheless, the incident did not improve Bernadotte's position at Court, because the prisoners' depositions, while exculpating him from any knowledge of their proceedings, made it clear that he was regarded as one of the republican generals in favour of whom the conspiracy would have operated if it had been successful. The names of General Masséna and of General Lannes were mentioned in the same connection.²

Soon afterwards, the First Consul's assassination was attempted by the explosion of bombs when he was driving to the opera. The outrage, which was sometimes spoken of as "the affair of the infernal machine," was of Royalist origin; and Bernadotte was free from any suspicion of complicity in it or of any sympathy with it. On the same evening the First Consul discussed very coolly what would have happened if he had been killed. Some of those present said that General Moreau would have succeeded him. "No," said Bonaparte, "it would have been General Bernadotte. Like Marc Antony, he would have presented to the excited people the blood-stained robe of Cæsar." Madame de Staël when referring to this incident, adds the following comment:

"I do not know whether Bonaparte really believed that France would have called General Bernadotte to the head of affairs; but I am quite sure that he said so for the purpose of exciting envy against that general."³

¹ *Procès contre Demerville, Ceracchi et autres*, Paris, An IX (1800), 30, 63.

² *Ib.*, 62-70, 209, 293.

³ *Ten Years' Exile*, 33.

When Bernadotte returned from the Army of the West to Paris in the winter of 1801 Napoleon was beginning to tread more openly his path to absolute power. He moved rapidly. In January 1802 he purged the Tribune by expelling the members of the Opposition; in May he obtained a prolongation of the Consulate for a further period of ten years. His next step was to get himself proclaimed First Consul for life.

He accomplished these results with the co-operation of a quadrilateral police system. There was the Ministry of Police under Fouché, the Metropolitan Police under Dubois, the Military Police under General Davout, and the Gendarmerie under General Savary. He encouraged these four departments to vie with each other and to keep watch upon each other.

No wonder that Bernadotte found that Paris had become a dangerous place for him to reside in. This appears from a letter which he wrote to Joseph pointing out the embarrassing position in which he was placed and expressing his anxiety to leave Paris:

“The political parties,” he wrote, “begin to agitate; clubs are being formed, the Royalists are numerous, and an opposition to them is being organised. Paris is a sewer in which all the impurities find a refuge. Help me, I conjure you, my dear Joseph, to escape from Paris in some honourable way.”¹

Paris was indeed a perilous place for Bernadotte, whether innocent or guilty, because he was regarded by the public, by the police and by the First Consul himself as one of the two or three generals who were likely to benefit by the overthrow of the existing Constitution or by the removal of the Head of the State.

In the early months of 1802 Bernadotte found himself the centre of a social clique to which the police gave the name of the “Conspiracy of Paris.” This coterie met in the *salons* of Madame de Staël, who was particularly

¹ *Morrison Collection of Autograph Letters.*

indignant at Napoleon's purging of the Tribune, because one of the expelled tribunes was her particular friend, Benjamin Constant. She has given us her account of the so-called Conspiracy of Paris. She tells us that "after the purging of the Tribune there formed round General Bernadotte a party of generals and senators, who encouraged him to form resolutions against the usurpation which was advancing at rapid strides."¹ He proposed "a variety of plans, all founded on some legislative measure, considering all other means as contrary to his principles." But not a single member of the Senate dared to identify himself with any such proposal.

One of Bernadotte's plans was to organise a representative deputation, which was to remonstrate with the First Consul and to propose to him a retrenchment of his power. It was easy to find senators and generals to approve of this idea, but the difficulty was to find anyone willing to join such a deputation.

General Savary, the head of the Gendarmerie, supplies in his memoirs a policeman's view of Bernadotte's connection with the Conspiracy of Paris.

"It is fair," he writes, "to acknowledge that he [Bernadotte] always opposed any attempt being made on the First Consul's life, but he advised his being forcibly carried off—a course which must necessarily have been attended with such a result. Every other member was for putting him to death."²

Modern historians take the view that Bernadotte was "the pivot" of this movement, which was a coterie rather than a conspiracy, but that either from principle or prudence he only proposed to act by constitutional means.³ There was no prosecution, and the only person who suffered on account of the "Conspiracy of Paris" was Madame de Stäel herself, who was banished from the capital. She tells us that "letters from Paris

¹ *Ten Years' Exile*, 68.

² *Memoirs of Savary, Duke of Rovigo* (Eng. Tr.), i. 287.

³ *E.g. Cambridge Modern History*, ix. 21.

informed me that after my departure the First Consul spoke severely about my association with General Bernadotte and my influence over him."

The Peace of Amiens in March 1802 brought to Paris several thousand unemployed officers who watched with hatred and envy the First Consul's open and rapid climb towards absolutism. This crowd of military malcontents looked for leadership to the generals who enjoyed the highest prestige and distinction, conspicuous among whom were Moreau, Masséna and Bernadotte.

Moreau had no political nerve. Masséna had no political ambition. Bernadotte was different. His Ministry of War and his opposition to the *coup d'état* of Brumaire were remembered. His republicanism was trusted. He became known in the army by the popular title of "the last of the Romans." He was careful to confine his plans within constitutional limits, but there were others who were not so restrained. The summer of 1802 was fruitful in military conspiracies, and the names of Generals Moreau and Bernadotte were mixed up in two of them.

The first of these plots, which exposed Bernadotte to an entirely groundless suspicion, was a mysterious one in which one of the principal actors was a Colonel Donnadieu, who was a friend of General Moreau's. There was no evidence to implicate either Moreau or Bernadotte in the Donnadieu plot; but these generals fell under suspicion, and it appears that General Davout the Chief of the Military Police, who was a fine soldier but a servile underling of Napoleon's,¹ suspected Bernadotte and placed him under surveillance.

Davout's spies actually hired a room which overlooked Bernadotte's house and garden. Augustin Thierry, a writer who made a study of the conspiracies of the Consulate, thus describes this incident: "Davout and his police had invented a piece of fiction. In their exasperation against Bernadotte, they sought to implicate him

¹ Augustin Thierry says that Davout expressed himself ready to "assassinate" Moreau, if ordered by the First Consul to do so (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, May 1908, p. 111).

in the Donnadieu affair. 'High treason,' they said." A life-long estrangement between Bernadotte and Davout had its origin in this incident.¹

The reckless manner in which Bernadotte's name was bandied about by the police is shown by the following incident. Two police spies belonging to different organisations were thrown together accidentally. Being ignorant of each other's avocation, they tried to draw each other into some compromising statement. One of them opened the conversation by referring to General Bernadotte as the "chief hope of Republican France." "But, alas, too honest!" said the other. "Why, when commanding in Brittany, had Bernadotte not marched on Paris with his forty thousand men?"² He would have been acclaimed, and would have overthrown Bonaparte's despotism." The other *mouchard* agreed in deprecating the scruples of the republican general. In this way the two spies, unaware that they were confrères in business, were trying to entrap each other by praising the man who was looked upon as chief of the republican opposition.³

A few weeks after the exposure of the Donnadieu affair, while Bernadotte's house was still being watched by General Davout's spies, a more sensational conspiracy came to light which went near to terminating Bernadotte's career. This was the "Conspiracy of Rennes," otherwise known to history as the "Plot of the Placards." The Western Army had been dissolved; and Bernadotte, who had previously relinquished the command, was residing in Paris when this bombshell suddenly exploded.

A large consignment of placards, which had been printed in Rennes, was seized by the police in Paris. They were manifestoes of a highly compromising character addressed to the armies and intended for distribution as propaganda. In these documents the First Consul was denounced as a tyrant and a usurper, and an appeal was made to the armies to form a military federation for

¹ *The Plot of the Placards* (Eng. Tr.), 222.

² See p. 127, *ante*.

³ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15th June, 1909, p. 754.

the defence of the Republic. The plot was a ridiculously clumsy one and was certain of immediate detection. The placards were addressed indiscriminately to all the superior officers of the armies, including Napoleon's intimate friends and adherents. One was actually sent to General Berthier, the Minister of War. It hardly seems credible that any clever, cautious man could have made himself a party to such a futile proceeding.

Almost the only writer who seriously implicated Bernadotte in the plot was Baron Marbot,¹ whose entertaining account of the affair has been condemned by every writer who has examined the documents as being utterly untrustworthy. One of them says of it that "it is nothing but an amusing and audacious piece of imagination. Errors of fact as well as improbability of detail swarm in this romantic fiction."² The errors in Marbot's story afford an illustration of the infirmity of mere hearsay evidence. Marbot was in Spain at the time, whither he had carried a grievance against Bernadotte,³ whom he represents as escaping prosecution for want of proof and leaving his confederates to their fate.

As a matter of fact, there was no prosecution, and Bernadotte used his influence to obtain pardon for the guilty parties. The allegation that Bernadotte's name was appended to the placards is unfounded. The only mention of his name was in conjunction with Moreau and six other generals who were represented as having been passed over in favour of the First Consul's brothers-in-law and favourites.

There were three circumstances which exposed Bernadotte to suspicion. The plot proceeded from Rennes which had recently been his Headquarters; its originator, General Simon—an austere republican who had retired from the army and was residing near Rennes—had been chief of Bernadotte's staff; and some of the placards had been conveyed to Paris by a soldier servant

¹ *Mémoires de Marbot*, i. 153.

² Augustin Thierry, *The Plot of the Placards* (Eng. Tr.), 305.

³ See p. 137, *ante*.

who was bringing to the capital some horses which belonged to members of Bernadotte's staff. General Simon and the other accused officers entirely absolved Bernadotte from any knowledge of the affair or of any complicity in it; and he was not implicated by any of the documents or witnesses. Bernadotte's aides-de-camp appear to have been as ignorant of the contents of their servant's baggage as was "Benjamin, the son of Jacob," of the cup that was placed in his sack.

Of Bernadotte's complicity in the Plot of the Placards no evidence has ever been forthcoming. All the witnesses agreed that he knew nothing whatever about it. Nevertheless, there was enough suspicion to convict him in those days, if the First Consul had put him on trial. Probably it was true that the tone of some of his orders of the day had been calculated to stimulate discontent, and that the plotters were his partisans.

Napoleon's anger knew no bounds. He spoke to those about him of having Bernadotte shot. Bourrienne, Napoleon's secretary, tells us that on the morning of a *levée* Bernadotte was in the ante-room standing in the recess of a window. Bourrienne came to him and told him that he had never seen the First Consul in such a passion. "General," he said, "trust me and retire. I have good reason for advising it."

Bernadotte took Bourrienne's advice, and retired to Plombières, the well-known watering-place. At Plombières he met his old friend, General Rapp, who resolved on his return to Paris to make peace between Bernadotte and the First Consul. He was discouraged but not diverted from his purpose by the information that Madame Joseph Bonaparte had already made the attempt, with the result that she was seen leaving the First Consul's presence in a flood of tears. Finding what he thought was a favourable opportunity, just as Napoleon was mounting his horse to attend a fête which Murat was giving in his honour, Rapp launched into an eloquent defence of his absent friend. Napoleon turned to him angrily and forbade him to mention the name of Berna-

dotte, who, he said, "deserves to be shot." He then galloped away, leaving Rapp discomfited.¹

Bernadotte's name had cropped up in connection with five "plots"; but he had no real connection with any of them except the so-called "Conspiracy of Paris," which was a conspiracy only in name. He was not a man to embark upon civil rebellion. He was much more likely to seek a distant employment or to leave the country in disgust. Before the end of 1802 he had begun to despair of the Republic and of any hope of an honourable career in France.

¹ *Mémoires du Général Rapp*, 16.

CHAPTER XVI

LOUISIANA AND WASHINGTON

1803

IN the autumn of 1802, while the First Consul was striding rapidly towards absolutism, Bernadotte remained at a distance from Paris under a cloud of suspicion and disfavour. We find the Paris newspapers in September mentioning his presence at Plombières, and announcing an improvement in his health.¹ His thoughts were again turning seriously to plans of emigration to the free Republic of the West. He was not alone in taking up this attitude. We know that several of Napoleon's family—Joseph, Lucien and Eliza Bonaparte, and their mother, known to history as Madame Mère—became so alarmed at the First Consul's ambitious proceedings, and so little confident in their prosperous issue, that, like Bernadotte, they were seriously proposing to settle in the United States.²

The First Consul, who desired nothing better than to place the Atlantic between himself and Bernadotte, proceeded to take the would-be emigrant at his word by offering him the Governorship of Louisiana.

The Governorship of Louisiana appears to have had great attractions for Bernadotte. The very name of Louisiana had a fascination for every Frenchman, because it was French in origin. It was called Louisiana after *Le Roi Soleil*, King Louis XIV. Its history was a romance of French colonisation. Its early settlers had been men of French blood who had come from the great

¹ *Journal des Débats*, 11th September, 1802 ; *Journal de Paris*, 15th September, 1802.

² *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, ii. 252.

lakes down the waters of the Mississippi. The Louisiana of 1802 covered a far larger area than the State which bears its name at present. It was an Empire, about five times the size of France, covering about a million square miles ; but this large area, which now includes all or part of twelve States of the American Union,¹ and supports more than fifteen million inhabitants, then contained barely eighty thousand. For many years this immense territory had been a bone of contention between France and Spain. To make it a nucleus of a French Empire in the western hemisphere now became the Gascon's dream.

Bernadotte saw in the Governorship of this undeveloped empire a career of independence and of glory far away from Napoleon's domineering control and from the Parisian atmosphere of intrigue. He made himself familiar with the traditions and with the material conditions of this immense colony, and cherished the aspiration of making it a flourishing centre of commerce and of civilisation.

While the Gascon's imagination was captivated by these possibilities, his native prudence prevented him from crossing the ocean on a wild-goose chase. Realising the impossibility of defending or developing so large an area without the introduction of skilled help and fresh blood, he laid it down, as a condition of his acceptance of the post, that 3,000 soldiers and an equal number of cultivators should be placed at his disposal and should be maintained by France for two years. He undertook to maintain them himself after that period. We are reminded of the similar prudence which he had displayed when he laid down the conditions upon which he would accept the command of the Army of Italy in 1798.²

The First Consul would not entertain Bernadotte's conditions or any other conditions of the kind. "I would not do so much," he said, "even for one of my own brothers."³ Bernadotte, when his conditions were

¹ Missouri, Arkansas, Iowa, Minnesota, N. and S. Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and parts of Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming and Montana.

² P. 92, *ante*.

³ Barbé Marbois, *Histoire de la Louisiane*, 223 ; *Nap. et sa famille*, ii. 93.

refused, regretfully declined the appointment. We are tempted to speculate on what might have happened if Louisiana had remained French with Bernadotte as its Governor. His administrative capacity, adaptability and power of winning popular attachment might have enabled him to render great services. Perhaps he might have been handed down with Madison and Monroe among the founders of American greatness.

The proposed establishment of French authority in Louisiana under Bernadotte was regarded as a military manœuvre both in England and in the United States,¹ where a powerful section of public opinion advocated the invasion and conquest of the colony. The First Consul now offered to Bernadotte the post of Ambassador Plenipotentiary to the United States, which appeared to be one of special importance in view of the pending differences between the two countries. Bernadotte agreed to accept the appointment in January 1803, but delayed his departure until the First Consul sent him peremptory orders to repair at once to Washington.

When the Ambassador started on his mission he was unaware that secret negotiations were proceeding which were to deprive it of its significance. Two days before his departure from Paris for La Rochelle the First Consul suddenly made up his mind to sell Louisiana to the United States ; and on the very day of his departure, the celebrated James Monroe arrived in Paris as Minister Plenipotentiary. These diplomatic arrangements, of which Bernadotte was kept in entire ignorance, converted his mission into an ordinary Ambassadorship without any special importance.²

When Bernadotte, accompanied by his family and suite, was starting from his home, he was told by his aide-de-camp, Colonel Gérard, that a Parisian fortune-teller had prophesied that they would be prevented leaving France by unforeseen circumstances. The prophecy

¹ F.O. 27/62 and 27/63.

² Barbé Marbois, 285, 302 ; Whitworth Despatches, 41, 174 ; F.O. 27/67, 27/68 ; cf. *Journal des Débats*, 13th April, 1803.

was strangely fulfilled. The vessel, which was to take them to America, was counter-ordered for a different service. A second vessel, which was substituted for the first, was similarly diverted to another destination. A third vessel was being got ready, when the Paris newspapers reached La Rochelle announcing that the negotiations with the United States for the purchase of Louisiana had been brought to a conclusion,¹ that the English Ambassador had left Paris, and that war had been declared between France and England.

Bernadotte at once resolved to throw up his diplomatic appointment. So he wrote to the First Consul that he regarded his mission to America as at an end and added, "I see in the *Moniteur* that England has declared war against France. I offer to the Government my services and my sword. I start for Paris to-morrow."²

At the same time Bernadotte wrote to his brother-in-law Joseph, asking him to bring before the First Consul his claim for a military command and begging him to counteract the influence of his "jealous enemies." He goes on to ask him to make his peace with Napoleon :

"Fate," he writes, "seems to have pursued me for a long time and to be always placing me, without any fault of mine own, in opposition to the First Consul. The course of events compels me to ask him to allow me to return to my military duties. Before he became a civil magistrate he was a general ; he above all men will be able to appreciate that nothing but duty, honour and right feeling have prompted me to make this request of him."³

Napoleon was by no means pleased at Bernadotte's return ; but he made the best of the situation. Not having any suitable command to offer him, he allowed him to retain his rank of Commander-in-Chief without active service.

¹ The Louisiana Purchase turned out to be one of the greatest events in the history of the United States.

² Sarrans, i. 49 ; cf. *Revue des Autographes* (letter to Talleyrand), 131.

³ *Catalogue of Morrison Autograph Letters*, ii. 173.

On Bernadotte's return to Paris Colonel Gérard persuaded him to visit the fortune-teller whose prediction had just been so surprisingly verified. He introduced the general as a merchant with important business enterprises in Germany, who wished to know whether there was any prospect of their success.

"You are not a merchant, sir," said the prophetess, "but a soldier of high rank. You are a relative of the First Consul, who will be Emperor. Beware of quarrelling with him, for he will be very powerful, and will have the world at his feet—and you, sir, at a great distance will be King. You will cross the sea to be King."¹

One is tempted to suspect that the prophetess may have been as well informed about the identity of her visitor as fashionable fortune-tellers in all great cities have to be. It is just possible that Gérard prompted her to preach self-restraint to his provocative chief. At all events, in the last sentence of her prophecy, she pulled her bow at a venture.

¹ Sarrans, i. 50–52.

CHAPTER XVII

AN EMPEROR'S OLIVE BRANCH—BERNADOTTE BECOMES A
MARSHAL OF FRANCE AND GOVERNOR OF HANOVER

1804-1805

BERNADOTTE had thrown up the Ambassadorship to the United States in anticipation of obtaining a high command in a war against England. Soon after his return to Paris the prospects of a war against England faded away, and he found himself for the next twelve months residing in the capital without active employment.

Rumour began to be busy with his name. When the English Ambassador¹ returned to London he made a report to the Foreign Office in which he foreshadowed the possibility, in the event of Napoleon's death, of the setting up of a military triumvirate consisting of Generals Moreau, Masséna and Bernadotte. He expressed the curious opinion that a Triumvirate of Generals would make other continental countries pause before embarking in war, and in that way would contribute to peace.

Madame Récamier tells us in her souvenirs that, one evening in the winter of 1803, at a ball given by Madame Moreau, she was sitting out with General Bernadotte, when General Moreau joined them and spoke indignantly about Napoleon's ambitious designs. "If I were in your place," said Bernadotte, "I should go to-night to the Tuileries and dictate to Bonaparte the conditions upon which he should govern. With your popular name, you are the only one of us who can come forward with the support of the whole people." When Moreau expressed his unwillingness to take the initiative, Bernadotte struck a note of warning: "Very well, Bonaparte will make

¹ Lord Whitworth; cf. Sorel, vi. 296.



MADAME RÉCAMIER.



MADAME DE GENLIS.



MADAME DE STAËL.

sport of liberty and of you. It will perish, and you will be included in its fall.”¹

There was a cordial friendship between Generals Moreau and Bernadotte; but their political aims were widely divergent. Both of them were beginning to despair of the Republic; but they disagreed as to the alternative. Moreau had leanings towards Royalism; Bernadotte, on the other hand, preferred Napoleon to the Bourbons as the lesser of two evils. His idea was to divert Napoleon from an absolutist to a constitutional form of government, or, in his own words, to induce him “to follow in the footsteps of Washington rather than of Cromwell.”

As a result of this divergence of aims, Moreau and Bernadotte drifted apart politically. Moreau became compromised in a Royalist conspiracy which led to his arrest and to his exile to America. There were also domestic influences at work. Moreau's wife and mother-in-law were Creoles who were jealous of their countrywoman, the future Empress Josephine. They governed Moreau and helped to ruin his career, which became, in the words of a writer of that day, “the plaything of two women.” Bernadotte's wife and the rest of his family circle, on the other hand, were wholeheartedly Bonapartist, and were always on the alert to bring about a *rapprochement* between the First Consul and the Gascon general.² Napoleon said at St. Helena that Désirée had been his involuntary spy, through whom he had learned what was passing in her husband's mind.³

When Napoleon became aware through these domestic channels that Bernadotte had begun to realise that the Republic was played out, and that any alternative would be preferable to a Royalist restoration, he resolved to “absorb” the Gascon for a second time. Thus it came about that Bernadotte, in May 1804, received an invitation

¹ *Souvenirs de Madame Récamier*; Chateaubriand, *Mémoires*, cited by Pingaud, 59.

² Pingaud, 59; Madame de Staël, *Ten Years' Exile*, 113.

³ Gourgaud, cited by Pingaud, 60.

from the First Consul to a personal interview. He was puzzled at the meaning of this move on Napoleon's part. His confidante was Madame Récamier, who tells us that when he received the First Consul's summons, he expected that it was a preliminary to a prosecution for treason. Afterwards he gave her an account of his interview. "Well," he said to her. "it is not what I expected. It is a treaty of alliance which Bonaparte wished to propose to me."

What occurred at this interview has been described by others¹ as well as by Madame Récamier. Napoleon began by giving Bernadotte full credit for an honest attachment to the Republic. He then pointed out that the Republic was a thing of the past, that the Republican Party had ceased to exist, and that a reconstitution of France upon Imperial lines was the only means of preserving the fruits of the Revolution. He made a clean breast of his intention to assume the Imperial Crown; and he foreshadowed an era of national glory, in which he hinted that Bernadotte was to take a conspicuous part.

Napoleon urged Bernadotte to throw in his lot with him, and, by rallying to the new Imperial Constitution, to set an example to the generals and officers who, like himself, still hankered after the idea of a Republic. This was the special service which Bernadotte was capable of rendering to the new Emperor, and he appealed to him to render it.

"You see," said Napoleon in his concise and peremptory style, "that the question has been decided in my favour. The Nation has declared for me, but she has need of the co-operation of all her children. Will you march forward with me as Emperor and with France, or will you hold apart?"¹

Bernadotte gave Napoleon a frank reply. He acknowledged the force of his arguments and he accepted his proposals. But he did not disguise his regrets and disappointment at the disappearance of the Republic of his

¹ E.g. Sarrazin, *Phil.*, ii. 206 et seq.

dreams, and he made no pretence of enthusiasm for the new order of things. Madame Récamier represents him as saying to her : " There was only one course for me to take. I did not promise him affection, but I promised him a loyal co-operation, and I shall keep my word."

Bernadotte now found himself included in Napoleon's creation of eighteen marshals who were designed to be the aristocracy which was to surround and support his throne. Upon the day of the proclamation of the Empire, the marshals were the first of his subjects to be received by their new Sovereign ; and this ceremony of the reception of the marshals by the Emperor was one of the most striking and characteristic scenes which inaugurated the new regime.

Addresses were delivered by the principal marshals. General Sarrazin says that the Emperor listened with an air of indifference to the commonplace addresses of Murat and Masséna, and received with ill-disguised annoyance a rude warning from Augereau that " he must take care of the military men, to whom he owed everything."

Then came the turn of Bernadotte, who made the following explicit declaration :

" I thought for a long time, sire, that France could not be happy under any but a republican form of government. To the sincerity of this conviction Your Majesty must attribute the conduct which I have pursued for more than three years. Enlightened by experience, I feel satisfaction in assuring you that my illusions are dissipated. I beg of you to be persuaded of my eagerness to execute any measures that Your Majesty may prescribe for the good of the country. I moreover declare to you, as well as to all my friends here present, that I share the sentiments which General Murat has just delivered you in the name of the army, and that I do so in no mere formal or verbal way, but with my heart and soul."

Bonaparte seemed surprised and gratified at the open and unreserved manner in which Bernadotte had kept

his word. He had been standing in his usual pose, with his hands behind his back. He so far unbent as to step forward and press Bernadotte's hand, and after a pause replied :

“ General, the firm persuasion which I entertain that your tongue has always been the faithful interpreter of your heart renders the avowal which you have had the goodness to make of infinite value to me. It is only by a thorough union that we can hope to complete the glory, tranquillity and prosperity of France. I beg you will henceforth consider me as your friend as well as your Emperor.”

Bernadotte, in accordance with his promise, lost no opportunity of setting an example of uncompromising adhesion to the Empire. With Murat and Masséna he took the lead in signing a roll of military men who rallied to the new order of things. To the republican officers who looked to him for guidance he declared that everything must have an end ; and that the Empire should serve to unite all good Frenchmen. These remarks won general approval except from the die-hard Republicans, one of whom was heard to say bitterly : “ Where is the Bernadotte of the Army of Sambre and Meuse and of the 18th Brumaire ? ”¹

Bernadotte had kept his bargain by publicly playing his part as a loyal subject of the new Cæsar. His adhesion was a real help to Napoleon, because he possessed prestige in the country and a strong following in the army. The ringleader of the Republicans had become their bell-wether. He had done it as a *pis-aller*. France having rejected the Republic, no choice seemed to be left for a Republican except to make the best of the Empire which had taken its place.² More than this Napoleon did not require from those of whom he said : “ I made them my courtiers, but I never expected to make them my friends.” He knew very well that

¹ Sarrazin, *Phil.*, ii. 206-242.

² To Lafayette he said, “ We have all been driven to bend the knee more or less before the idol ” (Sarrans, ii. 323).

Bernadotte had not rallied to the Empire until he had lost all hope of the Republic and that he had only rallied regretfully. Napoleon valued his adhesion on that account. It was a striking proof of the complete success of all his well-laid plans.

Lucien Bonaparte had left France with hate in his heart because Napoleon had refused to recognise his second marriage. He had spent the evening before his departure with Bernadotte, who had tried to dissuade him from expatriating himself. Bernadotte now wrote him a letter in which he laid bare his inmost feelings. Incidentally we have a glimpse of Fouché's police censorship of the Post Office.

"My dear Lucien," he wrote, "I take advantage of Dr. Paroise's return to Italy to have a frank talk with you without exposing myself to the chances of the Post Office which Friend Fouché makes more risky every day. I prefer that my letters should reach their destination, and I know that they forward nothing which displeases them. . . . You know, Lucien, that I am your friend, and that I did my best to dissuade you from surrendering your position and abandoning public life. I told you on the night before your departure that the man who gives up the game loses it."

In the same letter he referred in the following terms to his own feelings about the Empire and the Emperor.

"Since it has pleased the Sovereign people to despoil themselves in favour of an Emperor, it has doubtless been an implied condition that he will give them peace . . . and you will see how they will get it. It will be a case of 'Forward, soldiers, long live the Emperor!' instead of 'Long live the Republic!' That will be a far more effective battle-cry. . . . Nothing is so dangerous as absolute power, which produces those paroxysms that are called revolutions, of which Kings are generally the first victims. I am holding my ground. I wish to obtain a distant command. . . . Perhaps when I am far away, I shall no longer provoke hatred. In any case, I

am unwilling to repose under the shade of another's laurels. If I cannot do better I shall retire to America, perhaps to be followed by you. . . . Adieu, Lucien—au revoir—when and where God pleases.”¹

The “distant command” which Bernadotte wished to obtain was the Governorship of Hanover, which had recently been taken possession of by Napoleon after it had been for nearly a century an appanage of the King of England. The Emperor, having made use of Bernadotte at the laying of the first stone of his new Empire, was delighted to gratify him by removing him to a foreign sphere of usefulness. So he appointed him governor and commander-in-chief in Hanover with an army of 30,000 men.

¹ *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires*, ii. 445.



PAULINE BONAPARTE.
(Madame Leclerc ; Princess Borghese)
Duchess of Guastalla 1806.



ELIZA BONAPARTE.
(Madame Bacchiochi)
Grand Duchess of Lucca and
Piombino 1806.



LUCIEN BONAPARTE.
Prince of Canino.



CAROLINE BONAPARTE.
(Madame Murat).
Grand Duchess of Berg and Cleves 1806.
Queen of Naples 1808.

FOUR INTIMATE FRIENDS OF BERNADOTTE'S.

PART IV

*THE EMPIRE OF NAPOLEON I*¹

1804-1810

¹ This period has been treated with greater detail in *Bernadotte and Napoleon* (John Murray, London), pp. 85-249.

CHAPTER XVIII

HANOVER

JUNE 1804—SEPTEMBER 1805

MARSHAL BERNADOTTE lost no time in taking possession of the Electorate of Hanover, where he occupied the palace in the town, and the castle in the country, which had previously been the residences of the Duke of Cambridge,¹ the English Viceroy. His Governorship lasted about fifteen months, during which period his relations with the Emperor were smooth and satisfactory, as was nearly always the case when he was far away from his imperious master and was left in a position of comparative independence. Absence tended to reconcile them to each other, and distance served to draw them together.

The Governor signalled his arrival by issuing an Order calling on the troops "to repeat with their generals and with all good Frenchmen 'Long live the Emperor!'" He celebrated the institution of the Empire by a fête at which he presented sabres and muskets of honour to distinguished soldiers. He had silver medals struck from the mines in the Hartz Mountains in honour of Napoleon. He refused nomination to a Senatorship by a French Department on the ground that he "did not feel at liberty to accept any favour except from the Emperor's hand." He supported a petition from the inhabitants of his native town of Pau, requesting that, as a "tribute of their attachment and devotion to the Emperor," the historic castle of Henri IV might be made an Imperial Palace.²

To Paris Marshal Bernadotte travelled for the

¹ Son of King George III.

² Sarrans, i. 53 ; *Corr. de Nap.*, 8013.

Coronation of Napoleon, and figured at the ceremony carrying "the collar of the Emperor."¹ He is seen in David's painting of the scene standing near the throne close to the Emperor's step-son, Eugène de Beauharnais. Madame Récamier mentions in her souvenirs that she was interested in watching her friend, Marshal Bernadotte, in the *entourage* of the new Court.²

A few days afterwards Bernadotte took part in the distribution of Eagles to the regiments of the French army. In the historic picture of this ceremony he figures in a prominent place. On this occasion he listened to the Emperor's address which he was himself to echo on many a field :

"Soldiers, behold your Eagles. They will always serve as your rallying point. They will be wherever your Emperor thinks necessary for the defence of your throne and your Fatherland. You will swear to sacrifice your life in their defence, and to carry them always courageously on the road to victory. You will swear it."

During this visit Napoleon showered favours upon Bernadotte. At this period the Emperor treated him as the third personage in his military hierarchy. Berthier, his Chief of Staff, came first ; Murat, his brother-in-law and cavalry leader, second ; and Bernadotte, third. For example, the Emperor presented Berthier and Bernadotte with magnificent residences ; and, when the King of Prussia conferred three Prussian Black Eagles upon three Marshals of France to be selected by the Emperor, Napoleon named as the recipients of the Eagles Marshals Murat, Berthier and Bernadotte.³ This incident led to a quarrel between the King of Prussia and Gustavus IV King of Sweden, who sent back his Black Eagle to the King with the declaration that he would not share the honour with "Napoleon and his crew."⁴ The whirligig of time had a strange revenge in store for Gustavus.

¹ *Histoire du couronnement de Nap.*, i. 160.

² *Souvenirs de Madame Récamier*, i. 110 ; Herriot, i. 113.

³ *Corr. de Nap.*, 8249.

⁴ Rose's *Napoleon*, ii. 4 ; *Le Moniteur*, An XIII, 1024.

Of Bernadotte's natural gift for conciliating conquered countries there were several well-verified examples during his government of Hanover. He took particular pains to show favour to the military society of the Electorate, which included officers who had fought under Frederick the Great, and veterans who had met the Irish Brigade at Fontenoy. The experiences of these old warriors interested him, and he took pleasure in gratifying them with harangues in which he compared their regiments to "columns inflexibly welded as if by Roman cement," and to "human rocks which might be demolished but could never be disintegrated."¹

One of his military gasconades makes a good anecdote.² At a levée an old German officer, General von Gonheim, when he was presented to the Governor and was informed that he had formerly been a sergeant in the Royal-la-Marine Regiment, recalled the fact that in India, at the siege of Cuddalore, he had once nursed in his tent a French prisoner, who was a young sergeant of that regiment, and expressed his disappointment at never having heard from him since. The marshal, without hesitation, took to himself the character of the young sergeant, apologised for his forgetfulness and overwhelmed the old general with marks of gratitude and favour.

This incident caused such a sensation that the story of Bernadotte having been nursed by General von Gonheim at Cuddalore became current and passed into history as a real event in Bernadotte's early life.³ It transpired, however, that, when the marshal retired after the levée, his staff officers remarked that they had been surprised to hear for the first time that he had served in India. Bernadotte laughingly admitted that it was the first time that he himself had heard of it; and explained his masquerade by saying that he wished to rescue his old regiment from the imputation of ingratitude, and to discharge the obligation which his fellow-sergeant

¹ Sarrans, i. 55.

² Id., 58.

³ E.g. Wilks's *Sketches of Southern India*; Cornwallis, *Corr.*, ii. 63; *Quarterly Review*, October 1807, 62.

owed to von Gonheim. This story is so characteristic of Gascony that we need not hesitate to accept it. It reminds us of what Sieyès meant when he said that "*Bernadotte est du pays d'Henri IV et un menteur comme le Bon Roi.*"¹

Bernadotte had an effective way of staging his acts of clemency. A plot, which was directed against the French Government, was discovered on the eve of his departure to attend the Coronation of the Emperor ; and a prominent Hanoverian named Hedeman² was arrested. As the Governor was stepping into his carriage to set out on his journey to Paris, Hedeman's two daughters pushed their way through the crowd to affirm their father's guiltlessness, and to present a petition to the Governor for his release. Bernadotte turned to them, read the petition and replied that he "could not believe in Hedeman's innocence, but that he had looked into the matter, and, in view of the hopelessness of the plot and of the invulnerable strength of the French army, he would grant their prayer, with a warning that their father should be more prudent in future."

The marshal was equally successful in gaining the confidence of the cultivated community. He took the University of Göttingen under his special protection, guaranteeing the absolute security of their teachers and students. As a result, we find a former patron of the University renewing his benefactions and writing to his old Alma Mater : "To-day you have General Bernadotte as Governor, and all that I know of him assures me that I can now safely revert to my former way of discharging the debt of gratitude which is due from your always affectionate pupil." The University was completely won over by the attitude of the French Governor, and when he visited Göttingen, he was welcomed as their protector.

The marshal's manners made a favourable impression in Hanover. The local newspapers described him as "a man of forty-one who looks thirty-seven, middling tall, slight, with thick black hair and dark eyebrows,

¹ Page 98, *ante*.

² Cf. F.O., 64/65, Prussia.

expressive and energetic features, and manners which are courteous, agreeable and benevolent." A Hanoverian lady of distinction, writing to a friend, mentioned that at a review, when the horses of her carriage shied and plunged so as to endanger the safety of the occupants, Marshal Bernadotte, who happened to be standing near, mounted his horse and galloped away to stop the firing. It is needless to say that the writer had a good word for so gallant a Governor.¹

Bernadotte's enemies were disposed to criticise him for courting popularity and for his success in gaining partisans by his gracious and polite address. But it would be a mistake to suppose that his success as ruler in Hanover and elsewhere was due merely to adroitness or popular manners. It was, in the main, the fruit of his careful attention to local requirements, and to his vigilant care for the material prosperity of the people. He was far ahead of his contemporaries in his recognition and in his study of the economic basis of a people's happiness.

For the government of conquered places Napoleon made use of his marshals, who, as a general rule, regarded such employments as holiday tasks, and had no higher aim than to preserve order and to maintain the imperial authority. The majority of them discharged these duties smoothly. A few, like Davout, were so harsh and tactless as to be hated wherever they ruled. Only two of them displayed conspicuous gifts of government. These were Marmont (Duke of Ragusa), whose name has been handed down to our own times as a household word in Dalmatia; and Bernadotte, who, whenever he was given the opportunity, managed to make the imperial yoke in Germany not merely tolerable, but acceptable and even popular.

Shortly after his arrival in Hanover the marshal addressed to the civil authorities a series of interrogatories covering the whole ground of national production, revenue, taxation and indebtedness; and he promised that—"if his questions were answered with frankness and with

¹ Hans Kloeber, 147, 148.

good faith, the necessity for rigorous measures would be obviated, and the marshal would treat them as a friendly people, and abandon himself to the hope of making them forget the miseries of war."

Whatever misgivings the Hanoverian authorities may have felt, they experienced an agreeable surprise. Bernadotte used the information which he received for the purpose of lightening their burdens.

The marshal's main trouble was caused by the Emperor's insistence that his army was to be supported by the country which it occupied, without any charge for that purpose being thrown upon the Imperial Exchequer. He wrote to the Minister of War: "Tell Marshal Bernadotte to supply himself with the money necessary for the needs of the army. The Hanoverians are clever at making a poor mouth."¹

Napoleon did not believe in conciliatory methods of managing conquered countries. Yet he went out of his way to humour Bernadotte by enabling him to temper the wind of adversity to the Hanoverians. In doing so the Emperor was only "robbing Peter to pay Paul," for the Hanoverians appear to have been relieved by forced loans and exactions from other conquered territories. It was on this account that a Royalist critic described Marshal Bernadotte as having shown himself in Hanover at the same time "pillard et généreux."

In the autumn of 1804 a sum of £30,000 which had been exacted from a North German Principality was about to be paid into the Imperial Treasury. Bernadotte appealed to the Emperor to apply it to the relief of the Hanoverian finances. Surprise was expressed in official circles in Paris when the Emperor yielded to Bernadotte's pressure and diverted the £30,000 from his Treasury to the support of the army in Hanover; and it was regarded as a fresh proof of the Emperor's desire to reconcile the "last of the Romans" to the new order of things. When, however, the marshal went so far as to propose, with the same object in view, to cede to the Elector of Hesse-Cassel

¹ *Corr. de Nap.*, 7911.

the town of Minden, Napoleon dismissed the suggestion with the comment : " It would appear more suitable to demand a year's revenue from the farmers of the English domains." ¹

In the early months of 1805 there was great distress in North Germany, which the Governor relieved out of the military stores, visiting the suffering districts, and resorting to every available remedy. His efforts in this direction were known and recognised in England, where there was much sympathy with the inhabitants of what had recently been a dominion of King George III. Our Foreign Office was informed that Bernadotte had represented to the Emperor the necessity of diminishing the number of troops in Hanover owing to its impoverished condition, and that the Emperor had refused to make any diminution of troops.² Bernadotte, however, was not to be denied, and the Emperor, yielding to his pressure, wrote on the 17th March :

" MY COUSIN, . . . I have given orders authorising you to obtain from the united departments 200,000 cwts. of wheat to provision the Electorate. Take care that none of it finds its way to England. I have diminished your army by three regiments. This reduction of your forces will to some extent relieve your finances." ³

An Hanoverian Minister, Herr Thimme, has written of Bernadotte that " his nobility of character, his generosity and his humanity were so universally recognised, that the inhabitants preferred a French occupation under him to a Prussian occupation which they had good reason to apprehend." ⁴ The secret of his success lay in his possession of a combination of qualities such as are seldom found together. Unwavering in his enforcement of order and discipline, he was gracious and generous towards everyone beneath him. He was an earnest student and a ready learner of the real causes of local prosperity and contentment, and at the same time played his public part

¹ *Corr. de Nap.*, 8178.

³ *Corr. de Nap.*, 8446.

² F.O., 33/27.

⁴ Thimme, I, 91, cited by Pingaud, 68.

with such aplomb and dexterity as to win popularity and goodwill on all sides.

While Bernadotte was governing Hanover Napoleon was encamped at Boulogne with the ostensible object of invading England. At the same time intelligence was being received at the Foreign Office that an expedition was also to descend upon the coast of Ireland and that it was to be commanded by General Bernadotte.¹

It is doubtful whether these much-talked-of "invasions" of England were serious projects or were mere pretexts for collecting an army with a view to a continental war. Perhaps they began as projects and ended as pretexts. At all events, in the last week of August Napoleon suddenly turned his back upon "perfidious Albion" and hurled against Austria that mighty instrument of conquest and of glory—the Grand Army.²

Bernadotte was now appointed to the command of the Left Wing of the Grand Army and was called upon to enter upon the famous campaign which culminated in the battle of Austerlitz.

¹ F.O., 27/71 (Secret intelligence received 30th June, 1805).

² The Grand Army was given that name on 25th August, 1805 (A. et C., i. 218).

CHAPTER XIX

AUSTERLITZ ¹

1805-1806

MARSHAL BERNADOTTE now entered upon the first of the Emperor Napoleon's famous campaigns, the campaign of Austerlitz, in the earliest stage of which he was entrusted with an entirely separate movement. He was to conduct the left wing of the Grand Army to Würzburg, where he was to be reinforced by a Bavarian army and by French troops under General Marmont. Thus reinforced he was to drive the Austrians out of Bavaria, of which they had taken possession, and to restore the Elector of Bavaria to his throne from which they had expelled him.

In the march to Würzburg it was necessary to pass through the neutral territory of the Elector of Hesse-Cassel, who was so captivated by the marshal's courtesies and by his considerate treatment of his subjects that he wrote to him: "I shall always retain a regard for you and for the great and noble qualities which distinguish you." ² Napoleon, however, was not so appreciative of Bernadotte's methods. "You spoiled him," wrote Napoleon, "if it is true that you paid ready money. If I had foreseen it, I would have told you to pay in goods. He knows quite well that but for France he would be the subject of Prussia." In truth, the Elector of Hesse-Cassel and the other reigning Princes of Germany were between the devil and the deep sea.

At Würzburg, Bernadotte found another German sovereign, who was in a similar situation. This was

¹ The campaign of Austerlitz has been exhaustively dealt with by the military historians Alombert and Colin. Their history of the campaign is referred to in notes as "A. et C."

² A. et C., ii. 138.

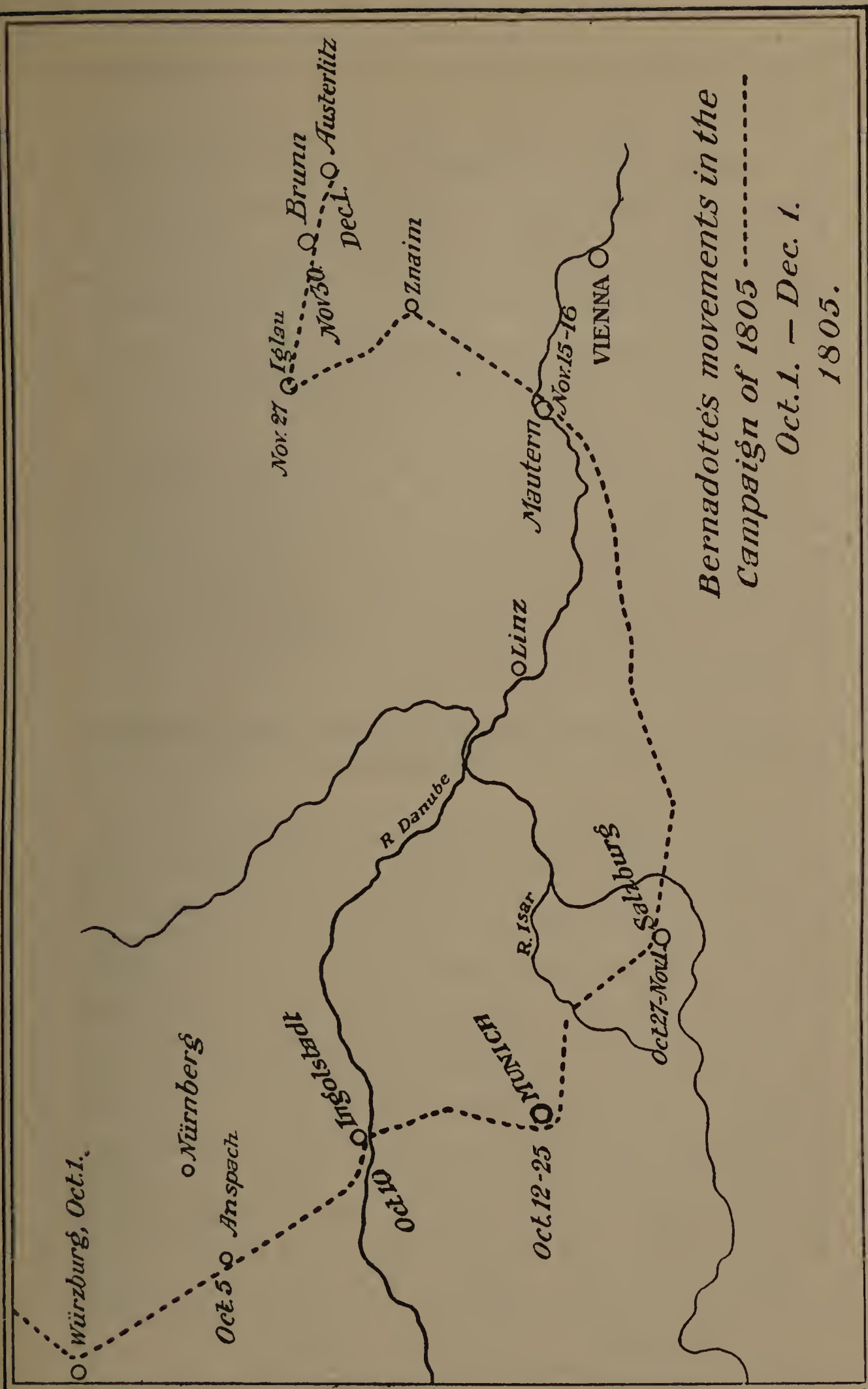
the Elector of Bavaria, who, having been expelled from his own dominions by the Austrians, had been driven into the arms of Napoleon. He had 20,000 Bavarian troops, who were to be placed under Bernadotte. He found the Elector anxiously expecting him, the Electress in tears and distress, and the Bavarian officers throwing up their commissions in order to avoid having to fight for the French.¹

It has been the fashion, in some quarters, to represent Bernadotte as setting the example of jealousy or ill-will towards his colleagues. The accusation was founded mainly upon the animosity (rather than jealousy) which always existed between Bernadotte and Davout and in a less degree between him and Berthier. At Würzburg we find Bernadotte displaying good feeling towards General Marmont, who was chagrined when he found that his corps was to be merged in the Left Wing. Bernadotte wrote to the chief of the staff :

“ I was much touched, Marshal, by the Emperor’s mark of confidence in conferring upon me the supreme command of all the troops collected here. I shall do all in my power to justify his selection. But I feel bound to avow frankly that this arrangement may not have all the results which he might anticipate. General Marmont is full of valour and ambition to distinguish himself. He has felt disappointed after commanding-in-chief to find himself in a subordinate position. I must do him justice to say that I have no ground whatever for any complaint against him. He has shown every willingness to execute any orders I may have to give him. I have had a private explanation with him. That is why I write to you on the subject. If the corps which I command is destined to operate separately on the Left Wing of the Grand Army, I think it would be for the advantage of His Majesty’s Service that General Marmont should be independent. MARSHAL BERNADOTTE.”

The request contained in this letter was refused : and the command of the whole Left Wing, comprising one-

¹ F.O. (Bavaria), 9/30 ; A. et C., i. 438.



*Bernadotte's movements in the
Campaign of 1805 -----
Oct. 1. - Dec. 1.
1805.*

MARSHAL BERNADOTTE'S MOVEMENTS FROM HANOVER TO AUSTERLITZ, 5TH SEPT.—1ST DEC., 1805.

fourth of the Grand Army, was left in Bernadotte's hands.¹

The next stage of Bernadotte's march was occupied in violating neutral territory by crossing the Prussian province of Anspach. By this breach of international law, Napoleon, of whom it was said that he "was the only man in Europe who knew the value of time," accelerated his operations by several days. The crossing of Anspach was carried out by Bernadotte in the orderly and punctilious fashion upon which he prided himself. In his report to the chief of the staff he wrote :

"I leave nothing undone to make our passage of Anspach as little burdensome as possible. I bivouac only on lands where the harvest has been saved. I pay for everything at full price in ready money. I employ money, caresses, friendship, everything ; and I strive to inconvenience as little as possible His Prussian Majesty's subjects. I have succeeded well so far and have received no complaints."²

Napoleon perhaps disapproved of these "caresses" in the same way as he had disapproved of them in the case of Hesse-Cassel.

From Anspach Bernadotte marched upon Munich, which he captured with ease, driving out the Austrians and taking 1,600 prisoners and nineteen guns. During the next fortnight he had his headquarters at the Bavarian capital. The only *contretemps* that occurred at Munich was a complaint by Marshal Davout of what he called a "preference given to Bernadotte" in assigning to him the command of the attack upon Munich. Davout resented being subordinated to Bernadotte, with whom he had been on bad terms ever since he spied upon him as head of the military police in 1802.³ The incident led to a correspondence and to a promise from the Emperor to Davout to give him another opportunity of distinction.⁴

Napoleon, having defeated the Austrians at Ulm, joined Bernadotte at Munich and started for Austerlitz.

¹ A. et C., ii. 156, 157, 348, 350.

² P. 144, *ante*.

³ A. et C., 703, 762, 826.

⁴ A. 20 ; A. et C., iii. 818, 935, 994.

Marshal Bernadotte now became the Commander of the Right of the Army, which he conducted to the Danube. The historian of the campaign describes this movement as having been "executed with remarkable prudence."¹

Napoleon now lost time in negotiations at Linz with the Elector of Bavaria. They agreed that the Elector was to take the title of King and was to give two Bavarian princesses in marriage, one to Eugène de Beauharnais and the other to Marshal Berthier. Anspach was to be transferred from Prussia to Bavaria.

Meanwhile the Emperor was getting completely out of touch with the Grand Army and with its commanders, and precious time was being wasted.² As he never admitted himself to be in the wrong, he began to look around for scapegoats, and found one in Marshal Murat, whom he accused of advancing too quickly in order to win personal prestige at the expense of the others, and another in Marshal Bernadotte, whom he accused of slowness of movement. The military historians of the campaign justify both Murat and Bernadotte and show that the Emperor, in his complaints, disregarded both time and space.³

Bernadotte crossed the Danube on 15th November. Napoleon declared that he had expected him to cross on the 14th, and wrote to his brother Joseph that Bernadotte "has made us lose a day, and on a day may depend the destiny of the world." In his impatience he made no allowance for the difficulties of the task. The truth appears to be that Napoleon, having lost several days at Linz, was throwing the blame upon Murat and Bernadotte. All the witnesses absolve them from blame. Captain Alombert, who has written a monumental work on this campaign, Captain Lostange, who commanded the Danube flotilla, Danilevski, the Russian historian of the campaign, and Baron Hyde de Neuville, who happened

¹ A. et C., iv. 44.

² "Son séjour à Linz a été pernicieux" (A. et C., iv. 172).

³ A., 140, 166, 178; A. et C., iv. 108, where reference is made to Napoleon's "ordres incomplètes et moyens insuffisants."

to be on the spot, agree in testifying to the dangers of navigating the river, the inadequacy of the transport materials, and the severity of the weather.¹

Bernadotte, having, says Holland Rose, "made history on his march," and having, according to an American writer,² "accomplished what seemed impossible," reached the plain of Austerlitz in time to ride with Marshals Soult and Bessières at the side of the Emperor at the inspection of the Imperial Guard on 1st December.³ It was the eve of the day which was to make that spot for ever famous.

The eve of the battle of Austerlitz was spent by Marshal Bernadotte in the company of General Junot, as we learn from the following letter which the marshal wrote afterwards to Madame Récamier in answer to reproaches for having left a letter unanswered :

"That I am far from deserving your reproaches General Junot will be my witness. On the night before the battle of Austerlitz I left him at 11 o'clock at night after assuring him that on my return to my bivouac I would write to you. He gave me a thousand messages for you. With my head and my heart absorbed in your trouble, I expressed to you all the pain which your reverse of fortune had caused me. I was speaking of you and occupied with you on the eve of the day which was to decide the destiny of the world." ⁴

On 2nd December, 1805, close by the small Moravian town of Austerlitz, was fought the battle upon which, above all others, Napoleon most prided himself. His pride was justifiable ; for none of his victories was lit up by more of glamour and of glory, or led directly to more brilliant results. He fought the battle with five corps, commanded respectively by Marshals Lannes, Murat, Bernadotte, Soult and Davout. Bernadotte and Soult were in the centre of the line.

On the morning of the battle, Napoleon and his five

¹ A., 214, 215, 304, 309 ; Hyde de Neuville (Eng. Tr.), i. 204.

² Rose's *Napoleon*, ii. 21 ; Sloane, ii. 246, 247.

³ *Victoires, Conquêtes*, xv. 235.

⁴ Herriot's *Madame Récamier*, i. 87.

marshals were the actors in a dramatic scene which has found an effective word-painter in one of the Imperial aides-de-camp, Count Philippe de Ségur, who watched it from his place near the Emperor's side.

The field was bathed in a mist which was dispersed by the rays of the morning sun. Ever since that day "the sun of Austerlitz" has been proverbial for the break of a fortunate day. On a hillock, which the soldiers named the Emperor's Mound, Napoleon, surrounded by a brilliant Staff, awaited the five chiefs of the army, who galloped up one by one to receive their final orders. Let us quote the eye-witness's description :

"From various points of our line we saw all the chiefs of the army gallop up, each attended by an aide-de-camp. Napoleon had given orders that they should all muster round him to receive his last commands. They were the five marshals, Murat, Lannes, Bernadotte, Soult and Davout. At that solemn moment these marshals formed round Napoleon the most formidable assemblage that the imagination of man could conceive. What a marvellous spectacle ! What a cluster of glory was crowded in that brilliant group ! How justly and widely celebrated were the redoubtable chieftains, who encircled the greatest warrior of modern times. If my life could last for eternity, the impression of that scene could never fade from my memory. There began one of the most famous days of history. How quickly the times have changed ! In those days how grand was everything ! What great events ! What splendid men ! What magnificent careers ! " ¹

De Ségur goes on to describe how Napoleon gave his orders to each marshal, and how the marshals galloped off one by one to the head of their respective corps. He gave each his own message. "When it came to Bernadotte's turn," writes de Ségur, "the Emperor's voice took a noticeably dry and imperious tone, and when, a few minutes afterwards, the marshal's two divisions were starting for the point of attack he harangued them him-

¹ De Ségur, ii. 463, 472.

self: 'Soldiers,' he said, 'remember that you belong to the First Army Corps of the Grand Army.' This incident was probably the fruit of some gasconading remarks of Bernadotte's which had reached the Emperor's ears."¹

The battle of Austerlitz illustrates the simplicity which so often marked Napoleon's strategy and renders his military achievements such a fascinating study even for an ordinary civilian. He seems to have known—whether from intuition, or from observation, or from information obtained through a spy—that the enemy would mass their strength on their left, with the object of turning his right wing. He resolved to encourage them in this movement, to lure their left wing away from their main position by deliberately allowing his own right wing to give way, and, catching them "hoist with their own petard," to win the victory by cutting their enfeebled centre. Everything operated and developed in substantial accordance with his calculations, so that the culminating *coup* of the battle was the attack by the French centre under Soult and Bernadotte upon the centre of the enemy.

Bernadotte was seriously hampered by lack of cavalry, which he was disposed to attribute to the ill-will of the chief of the staff. De Ségur, who was sent to him with some orders from the Emperor, found him agitated and uneasy. He pointed to the formidable masses of cavalry which were gathering in front of him, and complained that he had not a single squadron with which to oppose them. When de Ségur asked the Emperor to send him more cavalry; Napoleon answered that he had no cavalry to spare.

Bernadotte bided his time, and, when it arrived, de Ségur says that it was he who completed the defeat of the enemy. He is said to have done so by departing from his instructions, which were to move his corps to a point where they would have been useless. In disregard of these orders he is said to have detached a division

¹ De Ségur, *ib.*

towards an eminence upon which he rightly divined that the final blow would be struck. This timely support enabled Soult to cut the enemy's centre in twain. The Austrian correspondent of our Foreign Office reported that Bernadotte's corps, which was mainly composed of infantry, "took clever advantage" of the disorder which the French cavalry caused in the enemy's ranks.¹ In this movement Bernadotte exposed himself, as was his wont. He was unhurt, but one of his aides-de-camp, Colonel Chalopin, was killed quite close to him, and another, Colonel Gérard, was wounded.

The strategy of Austerlitz evoked the usual chorus of criticisms. Davout gave currency to a suggestion that Bernadotte was lacking in energy for not pursuing the enemy; but a pursuit requires cavalry, and Bernadotte was admittedly weak in cavalry. Besides, he received no orders to pursue. Mr. Rose is probably right in concluding that Napoleon, satisfied with the victory, gave little heed to the pursuit. Content with having inflicted upon his enemy the loss of more than two-fifths of their whole army, he claimed credit for magnanimity in having spared the remnant. Two days afterwards he had an interview with the Emperor Francis. An eye-witness tells us that he saw Marshal Bernadotte standing at a distance of five paces from the two Emperors.²

One of the consequences of Austerlitz was the cession of Anspach by Prussia to Bavaria.³ The loss of Anspach was particularly hurtful to the pride of the Prussian King, because, as he bitterly complained, it was "the cradle of the Hohenzollerns." Napoleon laughed him to scorn, and replied that "there is no need of a cradle when one is grown up."

¹ F.O. (Austria), 7/94; cf. *Victoires, Conquêtes*, xv. 256, 257.

² Chevalier de Maubart, ii. 29.

³ Anspach had been a Margravate and had been purchased by the King of Prussia in 1791. It had historical associations with the House of Hohenzollern.

CHAPTER XX

BERNADOTTE BECOMES PRINCE OF PONTE CORVO

JANUARY—JUNE 1806

BERNADOTTE was now selected as Governor of Anspach, where he appears to have met with his usual success as an administrator. The atmosphere of the Court was Lutheran. Afterwards he spoke appreciatively of the manner in which he had been received by the pastors and the people of this German province. Although he was merely filling a gap, he maintained a dignified Court, and left behind him an agreeable impression. A censorious German official, Ritter von Lang, tells us: "In 1806 came a French occupation of Anspach. . . . Bernadotte was the commander-in-chief and frequently gave balls. . . . Bernadotte is a tall, dark man, with fiery eyes under thick eyebrows." At a ball given by the Governor he saw Marshals Lefèbvre and Davout. He described Marshal Lefèbvre as "an Alsatian camp-boy with a wife who was once a washer-woman,"¹ and Marshal Davout as a little smooth-pated, unpretentious man, who seemed never to tire of waltzing."

An old captain of the Royal-la-Marine regiment, under whom Bernadotte had served in former days as a private soldier, happened to be settled in Anspach. The old captain presented himself at Court and was invited to dinner. He reminded the Governor of an occasion when he had severely reprimanded Private Bernadotte and had called him a "wrong-headed fellow."² "I remember the occasion very well," said the marshal, "but you see

¹ Better known by her subsequent title as the Duchess of Dantzic and by her *nom de théâtre* as "Madame Sans-Gêne."

² P. 6, *ante*.

that, in spite of my wrong-headedness, I have not done too badly."

Von Lang tells us that Bernadotte described to him the delight which he took in the business of administration, and told him that he had been very happy in Hanover, where he had devoted all his energies to the duties of Government. He added that he cherished the agreeable dream that Anspach was to be his principality and that he was destined to make the people happy.

Bernadotte was beginning to indulge in royal aspirations; and he was not fanciful in doing so. From Berlin came rumours which reached the English Foreign Office, through their agents in Germany, that Napoleon intended to make him Prince of Anspach, or of Passau, or of Innvertheil, or of some other German fief.¹

While Bernadotte was dreaming of principalities, Napoleon was actually contemplating his elevation to princely rank. He had begun to distribute crowns and sceptres by creating his brother-in-law Murat Grand Duke of Berg and Cleves, his brother Joseph King of Naples and of Sicily, his sister Eliza Grand Duchess of Lucca, his sister Pauline Duchess of Guastalla, and Berthier, his chief of the staff, Prince of Neuchâtel.

Napoleon now wrote to Joseph: "I think that Bernadotte and Masséna should be established at Naples with the title of Prince, and with adequate endowments to assure the fortunes of their families."

On second thoughts he postponed Masséna's elevation and suggested a Neapolitan fief for Bernadotte with the title of Duke of Tarentum² and £20,000 a year. "The late Queen of Naples did the same for Nelson," wrote Napoleon. "You see that I am rewarding, and I shall continue to reward, my commanders and my soldiers (*les chefs et les soldats*)."³ It is curious to find Napoleon citing Nelson's Duchy of Bronté as a precedent for the proposed nomination of Bernadotte to a Neapolitan fief.

¹ Hans Kloeber, 169; F.O., 64/71 (Prussia).

² Napoleon afterwards conferred the Duchy of Tarentum upon Marshal Macdonald.

³ *Roi Joseph*, ii. 97, 123; *Corr. de Nap.*, 9944, 1004.

Before these suggestions could be carried out, a fresh turn of events in Italy fixed Napoleon's floating ideas about Bernadotte's elevation. A dispute having arisen between the Crown of Naples and the Vatican over the two small border States of Benevento and Ponte Corvo, the Emperor suddenly formed the resolve of settling this dispute by erecting these two States into principalities for Talleyrand and Bernadotte.

On the 5th June Napoleon sent a message to the Senate, announcing that he was erecting the Duchies of Benevento and Ponte Corvo into immediate fiefs of the Empire. "We have," he added, "taken the opportunity of recompensing the services rendered to us by our Grand Chamberlain and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Talleyrand, and by our Cousin, Marshal Bernadotte."¹

On the 6th July the Emperor gave formal notice to Bernadotte that he was created Prince of Ponte Corvo, and directed him to send a Minister to administer his Principality in his name. The Letters Patent ran as follows :

"Napoleon by the Grace of God and the Constitution of the Empire, Emperor of the French and King of Italy, to all present and future, Greeting. Wishing to give to our Cousin, Marshal Bernadotte, a testimony of our gratitude for the services which he has rendered to our Crown, we have resolved to confer upon him, and we do hereby confer upon him, the Principality of Ponte Corvo, with the title of Prince and Duke of Ponte Corvo, to possess it in full proprietorship and sovereignty, and as an immediate fief of our Crown. It is our intention that he should transmit the said principality to his legitimate male children, in order of primogeniture, reserving to ourselves the right, if his said issue should become extinct, to dispose of the said principality as we may think most to the advantage of our people and of our Crown. Our Cousin, Marshal Bernadotte, shall in his said quality of Prince of Ponte Corvo take the Oath to serve as a good and loyal subject. The same Oath shall be taken by

¹ *Corr. de Nap.*, 10318.



MARSHAL BERNADOTTE.
Prince of Ponte Corvo 1806.

his successors. Given at our Palace of St. Cloud, 3rd June, 1806."

Ponte Corvo was a Ruritanian principality with six thousand inhabitants and just enough revenue to pay its way. Yet Napoleon valued it as an imperial asset at a million, and it had a priceless value for Bernadotte. It made him a French prince and a reigning sovereign ; and it gave him a part which he was able to play as if to the manner born.

This was the greatest of the favours that Napoleon extended to Bernadotte, who was thus, not for the first time, singled out with Murat and Berthier from among the other marshals. None of the others received titles until 1808, when some were made Dukes. Masséna and Davout became Princes in 1809, Ney in 1812. The rest never attained that rank ; and Soult was not the only one who aspired to it in vain.

Bernadotte's promotion caused particular annoyance to Marshal Davout, who had married a sister-in-law of Princess Pauline and thus was connected in the same degree to the Imperial family as Bernadotte. Davout was chagrined at Bernadotte's elevation, and thenceforward used to speak of him as "*le misérable Ponte Corvo*."

Why did the Emperor confer such a signal favour upon Bernadotte, who had been his rival, and the opponent of his climb to power ? Napoleon himself told his brother Joseph that it was to gratify him and his wife, who was Désirée's sister. But this is not an adequate explanation.

Thibaudeau, a shrewd observer, probably was correct in drawing the inference that Napoleon wished to complete his conquest of Republican France by irrevocably identifying the "obstacle man" of the 18th Brumaire, who had been known under the Consulate as "the last of the Romans," with his new era of titles and of Imperial splendour.

That Bernadotte felt grateful to Napoleon for this preferment is proved by the following letter which he wrote on 22nd June to his old comrade Marshal Lefèbvre, in reply to congratulations :

MARSHAL BERNADOTTE TO MARSHAL LEFÈBVRE

“ The Emperor, my dear friend, overwhelms me with benevolence and with honours. You know my soul (*mon âme*). You have had opportunities of appreciating it in those critical moments when nature reveals itself. Therefore you can understand how grateful and happy I am. For a long time my thoughts and wishes have been entirely consecrated to our august sovereign. My devotion and zeal could not be greater ; but there remains the pleasure which is afforded to me by seeing always before my eyes the evidence of his benignity and kindness. The interest which you take in my good fortune gives me the keenest pleasure. I thank you very sincerely. Believe me that always and in all circumstances of my life I shall be as much at your service as at that of JOHN BERNADOTTE.” ¹

This letter is not well known. It strikes a characteristic note of emotional exaggeration. But there is no reason to doubt that it was the sincere expression of the writer's feelings at the moment. Since the establishment of the Empire in May 1804 Bernadotte had kept the bargain which he had made, that, if he could not render affection to Bonaparte, he would at all events render him loyal co-operation. The present writer has searched in vain for evidence of any breach of that understanding down to the period at which we have now arrived. Bernadotte had sometimes gasconaded as he was always prone to do. Napoleon had sometimes found fault with him, but not more severely than with Murat, Ney and others.

Napoleon had not made Bernadotte a Prince out of love and affection. In all probability his main motive had been to strengthen his own imperial position and power. Very soon we shall find him dealing a heavy blow at Bernadotte ; but it will not be out of malice or of hate, but in order to preserve his own reputation for infallibility as a military commander.

¹ *Intermédiaire des Chercheurs et Curieux*, viii. 447.

CHAPTER XXI

JENA ¹

OCTOBER 14TH, 1806

WHILE Bernadotte was governing Anspach, Napoleon was collecting his Grand Army in order to invade Prussia with Anspach as a starting point ; and Bernadotte was given the command of the first of the seven army corps of which the Grand Army consisted.

Napoleon's first idea was to march straight to Berlin along the eastern side of the river Saale. But he obtained information that the Prussian army was collected near Jena, on the western side of the Saale. So he suddenly changed his mind and resolved to catch the Prussian army and fight a decisive battle at Jena. Accordingly the Grand Army was ordered to turn westwards, to cross the river Saale by various bridges, and to concentrate at Jena for a battle which he fixed for October 15th. He chose that day as a day of good augury because it was the anniversary of his victory over the Austrians at Ulm in the previous year.

In this concentrative movement Marshal Bernadotte was ordered to cross the Saale at the bridge of Dornburg,² and Marshal Davout was ordered to cross at the bridge of Kosen. These places were about a dozen miles distant from each other. They were ordered to debouch

¹ For this Campaign use has been made of *La Campagne de Prusse* (1806), par P. Foucart ; *La Manœuvre d'Iéna*, par Général Bonnal ; *La Campagne d'Iéna*, par Henry Houssaye ; *The Campaign of Jena*, by Colonel Maude, C.B. ; *Napoleon's Conquest of Prussia*, by F. Lorraine Petre ; and *Le Maréchal Bernadotte et les manœuvres d'Iéna*, par Lt.-Colonel Titeux, French Staff Officer, published in the *Revue Napoléonienne*, Tome IV, April-September 1903, pp. 69-152.

² Foucart, i. 518, 579, 580.

from these bridges and to fall upon the enemy's rear at Jena.¹

Bernadotte missed the battle of Jena owing to a series of mishaps. The Emperor at the last moment changed his plan, and fixed the day of the battle for the 14th instead of the 15th. Bernadotte, alone of all the marshals, received no despatch informing him of this change of plan. He only heard of it through an ambiguous message. The failure to send him the orders for the battle was due to what an historian of the campaign calls the "inexplicable negligence"² of the Imperial Staff.

Bernadotte reached Dornburg by a forced march; but the approaches to and from the bridge were so steep and so narrow that the crossing occupied many hours. General Dupont, who took part in the movement, has described the tremendous difficulties of the crossing. "If it had not been accomplished," wrote Dupont, "it would be difficult to believe that artillery could have crossed such a pass."³ Bernadotte reached Jena too late to be able to take any effective part in the battle in which Napoleon had already defeated the forces which were opposed to him.

On the next day Bernadotte was ordered to pursue the retreating Prussians. He was not blamed for tardiness in reaching the field. But, when his back was turned, Napoleon made a cunning use of the incident in order to screen a mistake of his own.

For nearly a century this episode puzzled some of the best of the military historians; but it has recently been unravelled by several military writers, one of whom,⁴ Lieutenant-Colonel Titeux, a French Staff Officer, has sifted the despatches and other materials in the French Military Archives, and has arrived at the conclusions which are adopted in this chapter. They had been anticipated to some extent by military historians in England and America.⁵

¹ Foucart, i. 518.

² Henry Houssaye, 124, 125.

³ Lt.-Col. Titeux, 86, 101.

⁴ Vide p. 185, *ante*, note.

⁵ Holland Rose, ii. 99, 100; Maude, 122, 175; Dunn-Pattison, 81; *Cambridge Modern History*, ix. 227; Sloane, iii. 282.

On the evening of the battle Napoleon supposed that he had met and defeated the main Prussian army at Jena. Next morning he was astonished to learn that the force which he had met and defeated at Jena had been a mere rearguard, and that the main Prussian army had escaped before the battle and had given him the slip. He was still more astonished when he was informed that Marshal Davout, on his way from the bridge of Kosen to Jena, had unexpectedly met the main Prussian army at the village of Auerstadt and, with the odds two to one against him, had completely defeated it.

This was good news ; but it involved a serious reflection upon the Emperor's strategy. It meant that he had mistaken the position of the enemy, with the result that there had been two battles instead of one, and that the real victory had been gained by one of his subordinates, while he had been fighting a mere rearguard engagement. Awkward questions would certainly be asked by his critics and his enemies, one of which would be, " Why had the Emperor allowed Marshal Davout with an inferior force to be engaged with the main Prussian army at Auerstadt ? " If he had told the truth he would have admitted that he had been mistaken as to the position of the main Prussian army, and that he had no idea that Davout would meet it at Auerstadt or elsewhere. But Napoleon never admitted a mistake of strategy.

Napoleon and his chief of the staff, Marshal Berthier, now looked about for a specious explanation that would screen the Emperor. They found it in Bernadotte's absence from the field. They represented that the two battles were part of a concerted movement, and that Bernadotte had been ordered to support Davout at Auerstadt, which would have made Davout's army adequate to the occasion.

What suggested this distorted version of the facts to Napoleon and Berthier and gave it a false colour of foundation was a conversation between Bernadotte and Davout on the night before the battle which Davout

reported to the Emperor. Davout, on his way to the bridge of Kosen, had received orders for the next day which contained a reference to Bernadotte. It was not an order, but an equivocal message giving them a discretion as to their route to Jena in the event of the two marshals being together—"If Marshal Bernadotte should be with you, you *might* march together. But the Emperor hopes that he will be in the position which he has indicated to him at Dornburg. . . . It is very necessary that he should be there."¹

The two Marshals were not together. They were on different roads which led to different bridges. Davout, having discovered Bernadotte's whereabouts, went to him with this message. In the course of their conversation Bernadotte said that, if they should march together, he should lead the column, being the senior marshal. Davout objected because he was already on the road to Kosen. This conversation had no real significance. Nobody had any idea that Davout would meet the Prussian army next day. The only question was as to their route to Jena. Ultimately Bernadotte decided that this message did not countermand, but rather emphasised, his orders to cross at Dornburg, and that it was his duty to continue his march by that route.

An English historian of the campaign has observed that "in going to Dornburg instead of marching with Davout" Bernadotte "showed a better grasp of the Imperial idea than his critics."² Lieutenant-Colonel Titeux is of the same opinion.³ So was Napoleon until he discovered his own mistake.

A week passed before the Emperor's ingenious version of the incident was formulated in the shape of an accusation, which was launched in a cunning way so as to avoid the appearance of a tardy afterthought. Bernadotte, who was in pursuit of the Prussians, was ordered to bridge the Elbe; and, before it was possible

¹ From the Swedish Archives, Kloeber, 174, 175; Titeux, 96-100.

² Maude, 175; cf. Kloeber, 173-188; and Rose, *Napoleon*, ii. 99.

³ Titeux, 70, 80, 110 citing Jomini.

to carry out the order, he was blamed for not having carried it out. Upon this peg was hung the larger accusation that he had disobeyed a definite order to support Davout at Auerstadt, and that he had done so on some "vain question of etiquette of commandment."¹ Lieutenant-Colonel Titeux puts it very plainly :

"Napoleon," he writes, "never spoke the truth when it did not serve his own interests"; and he adds that the Emperor, in order to lay the blame on Bernadotte in a plausible way, commanded him to throw a bridge over the Elbe the same day. This being an impossibility in the time named, Napoleon dictated to Berthier a letter for Bernadotte upbraiding him for "disobedience" and at the same time accusing him of disobedience at Jena.²

It was unfortunate that the two persons who happened to be mixed up in this affair were Bernadotte's only enemies in the military hierarchy—Marshals Berthier and Davout. Both had been his enemies from the start and remained so to the end.³ It has been asserted, upon the authority of a document published many years afterwards and attributed to Davout's aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Trobriand, that Trobriand, by eavesdropping at the keyhole of the door of the Emperor's room, heard Davout insinuating that he had sent a message for help to Bernadotte, who had disregarded it. If he did so, Bernadotte had his own troublesome task and his own difficulties to contend with.⁴ Napoleon did not officially adopt these complaints which are rejected by Lt.-Col. Titeux.

A biographer of Napoleon's marshals writes :

"The Emperor, to cover up his own mistake, asserted that he had sent him [Bernadotte] orders to go to Davout's assistance ; but a careful examination of the French des-

¹ Foucart, i. 186, 187.

² Lt.-Col. Titeux, 137.

³ See pp. 44, 174, 183, *ante*, and pp. 201, 212, 216, 217, 219, 526, *post*.

⁴ *Davout*, par de Blocqueville, ii. 433 ; Titeux, 69 *et seq*.

patches proves that no such document existed. In fact, the official despatches completely exonerate Bernadotte."¹

"When such mistakes arose," writes Lieutenant-Colonel Titeux, "Napoleon sought to conceal them by falsifying history and blaming his generals." He adds that in this way Napoleon created a legend against Bernadotte, which the Marshal's enemies afterwards amplified and embroidered.²

There is a piece of evidence which makes it clear that Napoleon's belated accusation of disobedience was an unfounded one. This is the Emperor's own statement in the bulletin which had been issued by him on the day after the battle, before he had realised the significance of his mistake and the necessity for covering it up. If his accusation of disobedience was well founded, he should have said in the bulletin that Bernadotte's corps had been intended to debouch with Davout from Kosen or to support him at Auerstadt. But the bulletin ran: "The Corps of the Marshal Prince of Ponte Corvo was on the march to Dornburg" . . . and "was destined to debouch from Dornburg so as to fall on the rear of the enemy."³ This was the truth. It represents what Bernadotte was ordered to do and what he tried to do; and it is inconsistent with the subsequent allegation that he had disobeyed an order to debouch from Kosen with Davout or to support him at Auerstadt.

For the next eight months Bernadotte was continuously employed upon active service with hardly a day's intermission. Some time passed before he realised the full significance of the false accusation which Napoleon had made behind his back when he was far away. When he did realise it, he naturally showed signs of resentment and of a sense of injustice.

In later years, after he had become a foreign Prince and had been compelled to take up arms for his adopted country against Napoleon, this incident was revived by

¹ Dunn-Pattison, *Napoleon's Marshals*, 81; Titeux, 121.

² Lt.-Col. Titeux, 107, 117, 136.

³ *Corr. de Nap.*, 11009.



MARSHAL DAVOUT.
Duke of Auerstadt (1808).
Prince of Eckmühl (1809).



MARSHAL BERTHIER.
Prince of Neuchâtel (1806).
Prince of Wagram (1809).

the Bonapartist writers of memoirs and was distorted into a charge of treason. But the verdict of history is better represented by an English biographer of Napoleon who writes that—

“for his absence from the battle-field Bernadotte has been bitterly blamed on the strength of an assertion that Napoleon during the night of the 13th–14th sent him an order to support Davout. This order has never been produced, and it finds no place in the latest and fullest collection of French despatches, which, however, contain some that fully exonerate Bernadotte. Unfortunately for Bernadotte's fame, the tattle of memoir-writers¹ is more attractive and gains more currency than the prosaic facts of despatches.”²

The translator of Marbot's *Memoirs* makes a similar protest, and states that the story, as told by Marbot, “was probably invented, when it became the cue of Bonapartist writers to blacken the marshal by every possible means.”

We shall find Napoleon, in the course of the next few months, displaying a confidence in Bernadotte, and lavishing praises upon him which seem quite inconsistent with the notion that he genuinely believed that the Marshal had been guilty of disobedience or disloyalty. The probabilities, as well as the documentary evidence, confirm Lieutenant-Colonel Titeux's conclusions that, in this episode, Bernadotte “*fit tout son devoir*,” and that, to cover the Emperor's mistake, “*la vérité est fausée avec une inimaginable désinvolture*.” Lieutenant-Colonel Titeux gives other instances of Napoleon's unfairness towards his generals, when it suited his purposes, for example towards Augereau, and even towards Ney, whom he once accused of being “*un coquin et un traître*.”³

¹ He is alluding to such writers as Savary, Marbot and de Ségur.

² Holland Rose, *Life of Napoleon*, ii. 99, 100.

³ Titeux, 70, 145, 147.

CHAPTER XXII

“ THE GREAT PURSUIT ”—THE STORMING OF HALLE AND LÜBECK

OCTOBER 15TH—NOVEMBER 25TH, 1806

WE must now recall the reader to the 15th of October when Bernadotte started in pursuit of the Prussian army. He had missed taking part in the recent battle and was burning to retrieve his reputation. He found his opportunity in one of the most brilliant episodes of the Napoleonic Wars. This was the pursuit of the defeated Prussian armies by the three marshals Murat, Bernadotte and Soult. During three weeks these marshals, each on his own track, chased the enemy to the shores of the Baltic. Napoleon said of this pursuit: “ It is a kind of hunt (*c'est une espèce de chasse*) ”¹; and the historians of the campaign called it “ the great pursuit,” or “ *la poursuite des trois Maréchaux.* ” Bernadotte’s course covered about 350 miles.

Bernadotte’s corps, being the freshest, was the first to get away. Starting on the morrow of the battle, Bernadotte found himself, two days afterwards, before Halle, a walled fortress occupying a strong position on the Saale, with a line of hills behind it. The town was protected by the river, and beyond it by a marshy plain which could only be crossed by a narrow causeway nearly half a mile long, and was defended by 20,000 fresh troops under the Prince of Würtemberg. To attack it with inferior numbers was represented by his critics as a mad act. But Bernadotte was in a desperate mood. The causeway, the river bridge, and the city gate were carried, and a terrible mêlée ensued in the streets.

¹ *Corr. de Nap.*, 11120.

The Prussians retired to the heights at the back of the town, an almost impregnable position. But they had to cope with a fresh army corps, and with commanders, Marshal Bernadotte and General Dupont, who were burning to recover their laurels. After a vain effort to stem the rush of the French infantry, they were forced to beat a retreat before darkness set in, leaving behind them more than 1,000 killed and wounded, 6,000 prisoners and thirty guns.

Three days after the storming of Halle, Napoleon, on his way to Berlin, arrived at the place, and examined with interest the approach to the town and the scenes of the recent fighting. He did not conceal his surprise that Bernadotte should have attacked with so small a force a position so formidable and so well garrisoned.

“I do not know,” he said, “that I should have attempted to storm the place with less than 50,000 men. Bernadotte hesitates at nothing. One of these days the Gascon will be caught. (*Bernadotte ne doute de rien. Quelque jour le Gascon y sera pris.*)”¹

Bernadotte, when the latter phrase was reported to him, complained that the Emperor and the Staff were unjustly depreciating a gallant action by representing it as a piece of foolhardy temerity. From Headquarters his friend, Marshal Lefèbvre, wrote to him: “They are disappointed. They would be better pleased if you had not succeeded.”² General Rapp, who was also at Headquarters, writes in his memoirs:

“Bernadotte’s corps had not fought at Auerstadt. He sought an opportunity of winning compensation for the glory which he had missed. He attacked the Prussians at the point of the bayonet, and overthrew everything that lay in his path. The carnage was frightful.”³

After a day’s rest, Bernadotte resumed the pursuit to the banks of the Elbe, which he crossed on the 22nd.

¹ Houssaye, 171; cf. Pingaud, 75, 76.

² Sarrans, 173.

³ Rapp, 90.

The crossing of the Elbe completed the first stage of the chase. A week had been occupied in covering a hundred miles. In the next stage each commander had his separate course to run and his separate quarry to pursue. Soult was to dog the footsteps of the Duke of Weimar, Bernadotte to follow on the heels of General Blücher, and Murat on those of Prince Hohenlohe. Up to this point Bernadotte, by the storming of Halle, had set the pace.

Now it was the turn of Murat, the first cavalry leader of his age, who had with him three brilliant sabreurs, Lassalle, Milhaud and Grouchy. With their support Murat captured Hohenlohe’s main army at Prenzlau—16,000 infantry, six regiments of cavalry, sixty guns and sixty standards. Panic now seized the Prussian garrisons. Milhaud with a small force of 500 men forced 5,000 Prussian soldiers to surrender the town of Passewalk. Lassalle, with a reconnoitring party of 700 men, appeared before the fortress of Stettin. His only artillery was an empty powder wagon which he planted on a neighbouring hill. The commandant capitulated with his garrison of 5,500 men ; surely one of the best “ bluffs ” in history. Bernadotte himself could not have “ bluffed ” more daringly.

The effect of these successes was to drive the flying Prussians out of East Prussia and to compel them to turn westward and to seek refuge in Lübeck on the Baltic shores with the three marshals in hot pursuit. Meanwhile Napoleon from Berlin was ceaselessly spurring them forward. His message to Bernadotte ran as follows : “ Not an instant’s repose until you have disposed of the last man of the Prussian army.” ¹

When the Prussians turned to the west, Napoleon wrote to Murat : “ In view of the turn of events you should assign to Marshal Bernadotte a special *débouché*.” ² Whatever may have been the exact meaning of this phrase, it indicated a desire to give the marshal a chance of distinction. Perhaps it was inspired by a touch of remorse. Bernadotte was eager for such an opportunity.

¹ Foucart, ii. 452.

² *Ib.*, 458.

He wrote to Berthier that he was leaving behind all his "lame and halt" and all his artillery except six guns and 2,000 rounds of ammunition. He added that he was pushing forward with 12,000 men, which he considered sufficient to dispose of an enemy of about double that number.

Two days afterwards Bernadotte came up with Blücher's rearguard near Waren. Owing to the situation of the ground he was only able to bring 6,000 men into action against a Prussian force which was two to one. The enemy offered a desperate resistance but had to retire, and the fighting was only stopped by darkness.

At Waren, Bernadotte had a narrow escape. Some Chasseurs, who had been sent to cut off the Prussian retreat, mistook the direction. Bernadotte galloped to their head, ordering them to turn to the right. The Chasseurs were going so fast that they could not stop themselves. The marshal and his horse were thrown down, and the Chasseurs rode over his body. When they had passed Bernadotte picked himself up, remounted, and remained in action for the rest of the day. This was a strange adventure for a marshal commanding an army corps; but it was noticed that Bernadotte, who always exposed himself when the occasion justified it, did so in these operations with a desperation which was attributed by onlookers to a desire to atone for his absence from the recent battles.¹

Next morning Bernadotte resumed the pursuit, and, after five days spent in daily combats with the enemy's rearguard, found himself in sight of Lübeck. In his reports to the Emperor he complained of his lack of cavalry. This was recognised by Napoleon, who wrote to Davout: "Want of cavalry has prevented Marshal Bernadotte from taking full advantage of his success."² It also compelled him to take extraordinary personal risk. At Crivitz his small cavalry force gave way until the marshal personally took the lead and rallied them to a successful charge. The Journal of the First Army Corps records

¹ Foucart, 629.

² *Corr. de Nap.*, 11199.

that : " The marshal was with his men in the middle of the *mêlée* in the thick of the enemy." ¹

Meanwhile, Marshal Murat, having completed his march along the Baltic coastline, reached the rendezvous. On the 5th November the three marshals, after a pursuit extending over nearly four hundred miles, were at the gates of Lübeck, where Blücher and his 25,000 men had taken refuge. The game was up, because Lübeck was an *impasse* from which there was no reasonable chance of escape.

The chase was over. The quarry had been run to earth. In his bulletin Napoleon announced that the pursuit of the three marshals had stopped every loophole and that the enemy, finding themselves anticipated at every point, had taken refuge in Lübeck. Now came the storming of Lübeck.

Marshal Bernadotte started for the assault at 2 a.m.² The city was surrounded by marshes and water, and had to be attacked by a causeway leading to a gate fortified with bastions and bristling with heavy guns. In front of the gate the Prussian infantry were posted with their field artillery. The French troops carried all these obstacles with the utmost *sang-froid*, and entered the city under a murderous fire from the bastions. Bernadotte swept the city with his troops and opened another gate to Marshals Soult and Murat. His losses were about 1,000, while that of the enemy included about 8,000 killed, wounded and prisoners. " At Lübeck," writes M. Pingaud, " he [Bernadotte] displayed once more all his brilliant ardour of former days." ³

An episode of the taking of Lübeck was the capture of sixteen hundred Swedish soldiers, commanded by Count Gustave Mörner. The marshal, as usual, loaded his prisoners with courtesies and attentions. He turned his own lodgings into a " prison-cell " for their colonel, who reported to his Government that he " had been very well treated by Bernadotte," and added that the marshal had made a strange remark to him that " it was not in accord-

¹ Foucart, ii. 673.

² On the 6th November.

³ Pingaud, 75.

ance with nature that Norway should belong to Denmark, but that she should be annexed to Sweden.”¹

Some writers have suggested that the marshal, by his politeness to these captives, was indulging in a piece of “political coquetry.” But he had treated them with no lenity until they were in his power. His summons to surrender had been “on pain of being cut to pieces.” He was on this occasion the same Gascon as he had been from the beginning and remained to the end, with bravado for the enemy and a *beau geste* for the vanquished.²

To the Emperor he wrote: “Your Majesty will see with pleasure the ensigns of the Great Frederick beside those of Gustavus Adolphus.” He recounted all his losses in killed and wounded since the combat of Halle, and added: “I shall consider myself fortunate if I have been able to satisfy Your Majesty’s expectations by the marches which I have made, and the combats in which I have been engaged.” Next day he sent the enemy’s standards to the Emperor with a dutiful letter: “I beg of Your Majesty to be so kind as to accept this tribute, offered by the First Corps of the Grand Army, to their august Chief, as a fresh gage of our boundless devotion to your sacred person.” Napoleon’s reply was a gracious one:

“My Cousin, I have received the standards which you sent me. I have observed with pleasure the activity and the talents which you have displayed in recent events, and the glorious valour of your troops. I testify to you my satisfaction, and you can count upon my gratitude.”³

In Lübeck Bernadotte stayed at the same house as a M. de Villiers, a resident of the place, who wrote his impression to the Comtesse de Beauharnais.

“The house in which I was staying was assigned to the Prince of Ponte Corvo, who returned wearied after the day’s exertion, holding in his hand his sword, which

¹ F.O. (Sweden), 73/76.

² He was once described as “tour à tour menaçant et conciliant.”

³ *Corr. de Nap.*, 11250.

he had already used to defend several houses from pillage. 'Madame,' he said to the lady of the house, 'I do not come here to do you good, but I come to do you as little harm as possible.' We dined with him every evening during his stay; he treated us with especial consideration and kindness. He allowed me to bear the title of his secretary, and authorised me to stop violence when I could."¹

M. de Villiers' evidence is corroborated by the recent publication of the official Orders of the Day. In one of them Bernadotte announced the appointment of a military commission with power to condemn to death every soldier who should be found pillaging or rifling the houses in the city. It proceeded: "The inhabitants of Lübeck and their territory are placed under the protection of His Majesty the Emperor. Every soldier who does them any injury is guilty of a crime."

Other incidents have been recorded. Captain Clary, his nephew and aide-de-camp, received a wound while personally intervening to protect life and property. A Prussian officer, Captain Kolner, was treated so kindly by the marshal that he refused ever again to fight against France.² Thirty years afterwards the Burgomaster of Lübeck, at a banquet given to the Swedish *Chargé d'Affaires*, is reported to have said: "This is the anniversary of the day upon which thirty years ago the Prince of Ponte Corvo preserved our city from pillage and from the horrors of war."

On the eve of the marshal's departure the Council of Lübeck offered him six fine saddle horses and a farewell address, in which occurred the following tribute from the captured city to its captor:

"May these horses safely carry Your Highness on the fields of battle, and may they bring you back to our midst our honoured guest in the hour of peace, our

¹ *Mémoires, etc., d'Allonville*, v.

² Foucart, ii. 783, 784, 824 n.

³ *Victoires, Conquêtes*, xvi. 378, 379 n.

benefactor whose remembrance shall ever be dear to us." ¹

After order had been restored in Lübeck, Bernadotte proceeded to dispose of a fragment of the Prussian army, which had escaped to the south. In his next bulletin Napoleon announced :

"The Campaign of Prussia is entirely finished. . . . Of the enemy's 126,000 men not a man has escaped. Of the Duke of Weimar's corps not a man has escaped. Of the Duke of Würtemberg's reserve corps, which was beaten at Halle, not a man has escaped. . . . The corps of the Prince of Ponte Corvo and of Marshal Soult are on the march to Berlin." ²

Bernadotte arrived on 28th November in Berlin. He was only allowed twenty-four hours to rest his infantry. Next day he was again on the march to take his part in the campaign of Poland.

¹ F.O. (Sweden), 73/76.

² *Corr. de Nap.*, 11270.

CHAPTER XXIII

POLAND ¹

NOVEMBER 1806—JUNE 1807

NAPOLEON had crushed Austria and Prussia. The Emperor of Russia had come forward as the Defender of the King of Prussia, so it was Russia's turn next ; and Poland was to be the theatre of war. Against Russia Napoleon cleverly exploited the national sentiment of the Poles. He encouraged expectations of an independent Poland under a French marshal ; and the names of Murat, Davout and Bernadotte were freely mentioned as possible kings.

The Emperor now selected Bernadotte for the command of the left wing, which was to be engaged upon detached and separate operations. An historian of the campaign refers to him as " one whom the Emperor could, as far as ability was concerned, trust, and did trust, in a semi-independent command." The same note has been struck by General Zurlinden, who wrote of Bernadotte that " he was naturally suited for an absolutely independent command." ²

During these operations we meet with complaints by Bernadotte against Marshal Berthier and the Imperial Staff for having ante-dated despatches which were sent to him too late to be effective, for misrepresenting him to another marshal, and for sending orders which were so

¹ For the campaign in Poland special use has been made of *Précis des Evénements Militaires*, par le Général Comte Mathieu Dumas ; of *Napoleon's Campaign in Poland*, by F. Lorraine Petre ; and of the *Mémoires du Général Bennigsen*.

² Petre, *Campaign in Poland*, 41 ; Zurlinden, *Nap. et ses Maréchaux*, ii. 64.

equivocal that he could not understand what they meant.¹ The frequency of these causes of complaint seems to have affected Bernadotte's nerves and to have made him more and more distrustful of the Imperial Staff and more and more impatient of their control.

A glimpse of Marshal Bernadotte advancing along the road from Posen to Grodno is to be found in the *Souvenirs* of the Duc de Fezensac, who was sent to him by Marshal Ney with despatches on Christmas Eve. He writes :

“ Having been sent to Marshal Bernadotte . . . I found him on the Grodno road and rode with him for three leagues. . . . He seemed to me very different from our other generals. In the first place he was perfectly amiable to everyone. That is the first difference. He was particularly so to me, although he only knew me by name. He messed with his aides-de-camp and with officers like myself who were on a mission. My horse was very tired, so he gave me another to ride with him. When I left him in the evening, the weather was awful. I said with a laugh that I would try not to drop his despatch in the snow. He offered to keep me until the morning, and to explain to Marshal Ney in a postscript to his despatch that he had done so. I thanked him, but said that I must not lose a minute in returning to my post. He had passed the evening questioning the man at whose house he was lodged about the condition of the country and the customs of the people. I feel sure that he had some hope that they would think of him in Poland [i.e. for the throne] and he was seeking to procure information which might be useful to him, as well as to make partisans and friends everywhere.”²

In January 1807 Bernadotte took up winter quarters in East Prussia on the Baltic coast. There was great difficulty in finding supplies in a country which Ney described as “a veritable cemetery.” Bernadotte and Ney found them at the Prussian seaport of Elbing, and

¹ Petre, 76, 77 ; Mathieu Dumas, *Précis*, viii. 865.

² Duc de Fezensac, 131, 132.

incurred charges of pillage. Their answer was that they were supplying their army from the only available source.

Bernadotte was not allowed much time to hibernate in his winter quarters. Three weeks had hardly elapsed when he received the news that the Russians under General Bennigsen had captured one of his outposts, and were advancing towards Mohrungen, another outpost which was held by a tiny garrison.

There was not a single moment to be lost. Sending orders to Generals Drouet and Dupont, who were commanding outlying stations, to join him at Mohrungen, he started on a night march for that place, which was distant about sixteen leagues. Marching all night, he reached Mohrungen next morning with a tired army.

This prompt and bold proceeding was much admired by the military men of that time, and drew the following eulogy from the Emperor :

“ What was remarkable was not only the fine conduct of the men, and the skill of the generals, but the rapidity with which all the corps broke up their camps, and carried out a night march, which would have tried any other troops severely, without having a single man missing when the battlefield was reached. That was an achievement characteristic of soldiers who obey no motive except that of honour.” ¹

When Bernadotte reached Mohrungen, the Russians were approaching the town. General Drouet had arrived, but not General Dupont. Although his troops were tired and inferior in numbers, he resolved not to wait for Dupont, but to attack the enemy, who had taken up a position in a neighbouring village, and were inundating the surrounding plain with Cossacks. The village was the centre of severe fighting, and was several times taken and retaken.

At one moment the 9th Regiment lost their eagle. Their resolute and successful effort to recover it was one of the turning-points in the combat, which ended in the capture of the village. The eagles were the

¹ *Corr. de Nap.*, 11737.

regimental rallying points of the Grand Army; and Napoleon, who never lost an opportunity of emphasising their sacredness, thus described this incident in his next bulletin :

“ The eagle of the 9th Light Infantry was captured by the enemy, but the soldiers at the spectacle of an affront which would have disgraced their brave regiment for ever, and which the glory of a hundred victorious combats could not have wiped out, were inspired with inconceivable ardour. They rushed upon the enemy, put them to flight, and recovered their eagle.” ¹

The French were now reinforced by the arrival of General Dupont, which gave them the numerical advantage. Dupont proceeded to attack the enemy's right flank, while Bernadotte himself led the attack in front. The movements co-operated admirably. The enemy, broken in front and shaken in the flank, were completely routed, and were compelled to retreat.

It was after this engagement that General Bennigsen, a Russian general of Hanoverian extraction, sent back to Bernadotte some personal belongings which had been raided by Cossacks, with this message : “ I owe this act of courtesy to the paternal manner in which Marshal Bernadotte treated Hanover, my native country, during the time that he commanded in that place.” ²

Soon afterwards came the battle of Eylau, from which Bernadotte was absent through no fault of his. It appears that the despatches ordering him to join the Grand Army were entrusted by the chief of the staff, Marshal Berthier, to two young officers fresh from the military school, who were taken prisoners by Cossacks, with the result that the despatches never reached the marshal.³ Bernadotte's enemies pretended that he ought to have guessed the purport of orders which he had never received. But Napoleon, when he knew the truth, took several opportunities of showing that the marshal retained his confidence.

A fortnight after Eylau, he wrote :

¹ *Corr. de Nap.*, 11737.

² Bennigsen, i. 154.

³ *Id.*, 181 n.

“ I have learnt with pleasure that you are satisfied with the spirit displayed by your troops. It is enough if you can communicate to them that love of glory and that zeal for the honour of my army by which you are yourself inspired.”¹

In later years the Emperor, in angry or resentful moments, levelled reproaches at Bernadotte for his absence from Eylau. It is difficult to reconcile them with this contemporaneous expression of confidence.

For the next three months Bernadotte remained on the shores of the Baltic in command of the left wing of the Grand Army; while Napoleon at the Polish castle of Finkenstein was spinning diplomatic webs with Talleyrand, and was taking relaxation in the society of his Polish mistress, the beautiful Madame Walewska.

Early in June the Russians resumed hostilities by attacking Bernadotte's position at Spanden. It was in the defence of Spanden that the marshal received a wound in the neck from a musket-ball, while riding into the middle of the fire to quicken a movement which was being executed too slowly. After he had fallen he tried to retain command, and wrote the following letter to the chief of the Imperial Staff:

“ I have been wounded by a ball in the neck. I do not believe my wound is dangerous, but it gives me great pain. Nevertheless, I have not left the field of battle, and you can assure the Emperor that I shall remain on the field so long as my strength enables me to do so.”²

The day was won and the bulletins announced that the Prince of Ponte Corvo had repulsed the enemy with heavy loss. Désirée, who remained as unspoiled and affectionate as in the days of her girlhood at Marseilles, had come from Paris to be near her husband. She arrived in time to act the part of his nurse; and for six weeks the disabled marshal enjoyed one of the few intervals of repose and domesticity that were accorded

¹ *Corr. de Nap.*, 11855.

² Bennigsen, ii. 153, n. 4.

to him during the six years in which he served the Emperor.

Napoleon seems to have been genuinely touched by an incident which illustrated the marshal's well-known willingness to expose himself in the field, and reminded the Emperor that, if Bernadotte was not always a tractable subject, he was ready to risk his life in the service of France. When the news reached Headquarters, Berthier wrote to the marshal: "It is difficult to express, Prince, the pain which the Emperor feels at hearing of your wound, especially at a time when His Majesty has so much need of your talents."¹

The impression made upon Napoleon was more than a passing one. Six months afterwards he wrote to his brother Jerome, King of Westphalia, reproving him for having conferred a pension upon a favourite named Lecamus.

"I have marshals," wrote the Emperor, "who have won battles, and who are covered with wounds, and who have not the reward you have given this Lecamus. . . . If Lecamus has 40,000 francs a year, what is to be given to Marshals Berthier, Lannes and Bernadotte, and a score of persons who have paid for the throne on which you sit with wounds of every kind?"²

Among the letters which reached the wounded marshal was one from Madame Récamier, complaining of silence. Let his answer to her complaint serve as a model:

"When friendship, tenderness and susceptibility inflame the heart, everything that is expressed is deeply felt. I have never ceased to address to you my hopes and good wishes, and, although fated to be ever your devoted servant, I did not wish to risk wearying you by my letters. Farewell. If you still think of me, believe that you are my chief ideal, and that nothing can equal the tender and affectionate sentiments which I have dedicated to your worship."³

¹ Hans Kloeber, 212.

² *New Letters of Napoleon*, 64, 68.

³ Herriot's *Madame Récamier*, i. 87.

CHAPTER XXIV

DENMARK AND HAMBURG

JUNE 1807—APRIL 1809

WHILE Bernadotte was recovering from his wound, the Emperor brought the Polish Campaign to a triumphant conclusion with the victory of Friedland, the first fruit of which was the Treaty of Tilsit. Under this Treaty Russia and Denmark were to co-operate in Napoleon's Continental System, which meant excluding British commerce from the Baltic and from the coast-line of North Germany. With the object of carrying out this purpose Marshal Bernadotte was ordered to occupy the Hanseatic towns, with the title of Governor and Commander-in-Chief and with Headquarters at Hamburg.

Bernadotte, realising where the danger lay, advised Napoleon to seize Copenhagen and take the gate of the Baltic into his own hands. But Napoleon hesitated and gave time for Canning, the English Prime Minister, to form and execute one of the boldest *coups* in naval history. Copenhagen was bombarded and the Danish fleet was captured. "England," as Vandal puts it, "had broken, before he had time to seize it, the weapon which Napoleon was about to make his own." The Emperor was thrown into transports of rage. However, as he had no ships to oppose to the English fleet, the only thing he could do was to send Marshal Bernadotte with an army of 23,000 men to occupy Denmark, leaving General Dupas as Deputy-Governor in the Hanseatic towns.

Bernadotte's army of occupation was a motley one, the most picturesque element of which was a Spanish contingent of 14,000 fine well-behaved soldiers who were

astonished when they learned that, fifteen years back, their new chief had been a ranker like themselves and was now a marshal and a prince. They soon became attracted to him when they recognised the Moorish strain in his ancestry by a glance at his dark complexion and black hair and eyes. Born and bred within sight of the Pyrenees, he spoke their language and resembled them in appearance. "The general is one of ourselves," they exclaimed on the occasion of his first inspection. He responded by making a point of always including several Spanish companies in his personal Guard of Honour.¹

The Spanish Commandant, the Marquis de la Romana, was a Castilian, who declared everywhere that he was a sincere admirer of the genius and glory of the Emperor Napoleon and that he was "proud to serve under the noble Prince of Ponte Corvo," whom he claimed as almost a fellow countryman. Suddenly a despatch came to Bernadotte from Bayonne informing him that Napoleon had forced the King of Spain to resign his crown and had made his brother Joseph King of Spain. Bernadotte was directed to keep the news as long as possible from the Spanish soldiers. "You will consult the Spanish Commandant," ran the despatch, "and you will take every possible precaution to prevent a bad effect being produced upon the troops."

When the news of Joseph's elevation to the throne of Spain reached Bernadotte, he found himself in a strange position. He was in Denmark, commanding Spanish troops; and it now became his duty to require them to swear allegiance to his own brother-in-law, who had been recently known as Citizen Joseph Bonaparte, and was now the King of Spain. The news of the Spanish Revolution was broken so gently to the Marquis de la Romana, that he failed at the first blush to appreciate its significance, and wrote to Bernadotte assuring him that he was prepared to recognise the new King.

The English Foreign Minister, George Canning, now employed an adventurous Scottish priest, Brother James

¹ Boppé, *Les Espagnols de la Grande Armée*, 147.

Robertson, as a secret service agent. He travelled to Denmark and succeeded in informing the Spaniards of the true course of events and of the true state of feeling in Spain. These seeds were sown on fruitful ground. When the troops were required to recognise the new dynasty, two regiments broke into mutiny; and a French officer was shot. Before Bernadotte could reach the scene of the outbreak, Admiral Saumarez arrived with the British fleet and succeeded in embarking de la Romana with 9,000 of his troops, and in carrying them off to Spain.¹

Bernadotte arrived in time to prevent the embarkation of the rest of the Spaniards, who were sent to France as prisoners. The incident did not affect his reputation. The official view was that the Spaniards had abused his confidence. A few weeks afterwards the Emperor wrote to him: "If circumstances enable me to prove my esteem for you, you may be sure that I shall do so with pleasure."²

The Records of our Foreign Office contain evidence that Napoleon was credited in Prussia with the intention of incorporating Denmark in his empire, under the sovereignty of Bernadotte:

"The French . . . have so little consideration for Denmark that it is not doubted that they have in view to annex her continental possessions, and even the islands, probably under the Prince of Ponte Corvo."³

The Emperor's attitude of mind towards Bernadotte was so variable, that there is nothing incredible in these rumours. Sometimes he spoke of him with appreciation and even with enthusiasm. At other times, when his name cropped up in connection with political intrigues, he disparaged him and raked up every imaginable complaint against him. Sometimes he talked of having him shot, sometimes of selecting him as a foreign sovereign, or even as successor to his own throne.

¹ See Sir Charles Oman's *Studies in the Napoleonic Wars*, pp. 113-40.

² *Corr. de Nap.*, 14417.

³ F.O., 73/52; (Prussia), 64/79.

During this imbroglio an emissary had come from the Emperor to Marshal Bernadotte to warn him that it was possible that he might receive the command of the French armies in Spain with the prospect of becoming " King of Spain and of the Balearic Isles." Napoleon had met with difficulties in finding a King of Spain. His first choice had been his brother Louis, who refused. His second string had been Joseph, who was already King of Naples and was not eager for a change. Failing his brothers, he held Murat and Bernadotte in reserve. Ultimately he forced Joseph to accept the Throne of Spain and made Murat King of Naples.

Bernadotte gave Madame de Staël his version of this incident. He appears to have given an evasive answer to the effect that if ordered to command the armies in Spain it would be his duty to obey. He was beginning to think seriously of a royal destiny, and he told Madame de Staël that " if he should ever be placed on a foreign throne he would become a Spaniard, or a Pole, or a Dutchman as the case might be, and that he would never consent to reign with a knife held to his throat."

A few months after these events, the Emperor, talking to Count Roëderer in reference to King Joseph, who was giving him trouble, said: " If necessary, I shall adopt a general for the purpose of sending him to Spain. I shall adopt Bernadotte, just as I have already adopted Murat." A few minutes afterwards, in reference to the succession to his own throne, he added: " I have no need of my family. . . . I shall adopt a son, a General Bernadotte. I have already adopted Murat. Nothing shall stop my destinies." ¹ Here we have Napoleon's thoughts wandering outside his immediate family, and fixing on Bernadotte as next in the running for a throne—even for his own.

It was at this time that the Emperor paid a special compliment to the marshal's wife, Désirée. The Emperor of Russia had sent to Napoleon a gift of three priceless fur pelisses. He kept one of them for his own use, and

¹ *Journal du Comte Roëderer*, 245, 251.

gave the others as presents to his sister Pauline and to the Princess of Ponte Corvo respectively.

Shortly after the affair of the Spanish regiments Bernadotte returned to his Headquarters at Hamburg, which had suffered, in his absence, from the maladministration of his Deputy. Public indignation had culminated in an *émeute*, and in the establishment of martial law. Bernadotte quickly restored order.¹

We find a French historian, who made a special study of all that happened in Germany under the First Empire, declaring that the inhabitants of the Hanseatic cities "gave more praise to Bernadotte than to any of the other generals of Napoleon." ²

"Nobody," writes a rather unprejudiced biographer, "possessed in such a high degree as Bernadotte the talent for creating order out of disorder, for giving dignity to coercion, for winning the gratitude of the peoples of whom he was appointed the oppressor." ³

An example of the marshal's methods was afforded by the case of a schoolmaster named De Bonald, who had published a grammar in which occurred the following sentence, as an example of syntax: "They call Bonaparte a great general; but he is only a successful brigand." When Bonaparte became Emperor of the French, and conqueror of North Germany, the schoolmaster had thought it prudent to correct his syntax, which he had done by taking a name similar in lettering, and substituting the name of Bernadotte for that of Bonaparte.

When Bernadotte found that the youth of Hamburg were being taught that the Governor of the Hanseatic towns was no better than "a successful brigand," he was forced to take notice of a reflection upon the Emperor's representative. The schoolmaster was summoned, and was severely reprimanded. All copies of the grammar were called in and destroyed. When, however, Bernadotte ascertained that the schoolmaster was in

¹ Bourrienne, vii. 217.

² Rambaud, *L'Allemagne sous Napoléon*, 447, 453.

³ Sarrans, i. 110.

needy circumstances, he paid him the full price for all the books. De Bonald was quickly reconciled to Bernadottian "brigandage," and he and his friends became warm supporters of the French Governor.

Another incident affords an illustration of Bernadotte's dexterity. The residence assigned by the Senate to the Governor was a dilapidated old mansion, shabbily furnished and in bad repair. Bernadotte made no protest, but bided his time. His time came when a Senator was commissioned by his colleagues to petition the Governor for the release of a prominent prisoner. The Senator in discharging his duty declared that, until his petition was granted, he would not leave the Governor's palace, even if he had to remain there for a week. Bernadotte courteously expressed a hope that the Senator would remain a fortnight instead of a week, and requested him to select his apartments so as to enable them to be suitably furnished. "This house," said the Governor, "is of course quite good enough for a mere soldier such as I am, accustomed to sleep in camps and to bivouac on battlefields, but I could not for an instant allow a Senator of Hamburg to be so poorly housed." The shot took effect; and the Senate proceeded to furnish the Governor's Palace so luxuriously as to afford him an opportunity of politely intervening to curb their extravagance.¹

Bernadotte's tact and popularity were turned to good profit by the Emperor. Bourrienne, the French Minister, was appalled at the receipt of an order to raise three thousand sailors in the Hanseatic towns in order to recruit the French Navy. Bernadotte smiled, and said: "Leave it to me." The success of this levy, which produced nearly the whole required number, astonished everyone.

Quarrels were sure to occur when Napoleon divided the command of his armies in Germany between Marshals Bernadotte and Davout. Bernadotte was furious when it came to his knowledge that Davout had opened his letters on their way from Paris. When one of Davout's

¹ Sarrans, i. 111, 112; cf. F.O., 33/38 (Hamburg).



MARSHAL BERNADOTTE.

Prince of Ponte Corvo.

Governor of the Hanseatic Towns 1808.

officers, named De Cubières, came to Hamburg with a message, Bernadotte said to him: "Tell your marshal that I shall strike him across the face with a horsewhip the first time I meet him." De Cubières adds that "Marshal Davout had some great qualities, but he made himself hated everywhere by the trouble he created (*ses tracasseries*), by his inquisitorial police methods and by his bad manners."¹ Davout and Bernadotte remained enemies to the end. In later years Davout is found applauding his daughter for expressing the opinion that Bernadotte deserved to be hanged.²

Another difference arose between them when Davout blamed Bernadotte because, on the occasion of the search of the house of the Prince of Sayn-Wittgenstein who was suspected of treasonable intrigues, he had informed the Prince of the nature of the accusations which had been made against him. This incident elicited from Bernadotte a sarcastic letter, the sting of which lies in the italicised passage:

" Marshal Bernadotte to Marshal Davout

"As regards Your Excellency's complaints . . . I feel bound to inform you that . . . it was in obedience to instructions from me that M. Bourrienne and Colonel Gérard informed the Prince of Sayn-Wittgenstein of the charge which has been made against him. *I am ignorant whether this is customary in police operations*; but I consider that in ordering a domiciliary visit to the house of a man of high rank and holding a public office, I should present an example of French fair-play, and act with the dignity which should characterise every proceeding which is carried out in the name of our august Sovereign. I have the honour to be, Duke, your very humble and obedient Servant,

"BERNADOTTE."³

Bernadotte was at Hamburg when he received the news of his mother's death, which took place at Pau in

¹ *Souvenirs de Baron de Casse* (letter from de Cubières), 97, 98.

² *Davout*, par Montégut, 247.

³ *Davout*, par de Blocqueville, ii. 420.

February 1809. To his brother, then a leading advocate of Pau, with whom he had always maintained a cordial correspondence, he wrote :

“ MY DEAR BROTHER,—I have received with profound grief the news of the loss which we have sustained by the death of our beloved and revered mother. I was so little prepared for this sad event that I was cherishing the hope of soon being able to pay a visit to Pau for the purpose of seeing her, and of folding her in my arms. Providence has decided otherwise, and we must submit to its decrees, although the pain caused by such a great and sudden loss is cruel indeed. I thank you, my dear brother, for your consolatory words. I appreciate their sincerity, and I receive them with gratefulness. Farewell, my dear brother. Preserve your health for the sake of your wife and children, and believe me that I am as inseparably bound to you as to your brother,

“ J. BERNADOTTE.

“ P.S.—I beg of you to convey to the magisterial body and to the public officers of Pau my grateful recognition of the touching proof of their attachment which they have displayed towards me on the occasion of this sad event.”¹

Less than thirty years had elapsed since the day when Bernadotte, as a lad, ran away from his mother's and brother's home, and had his passport viséd by the mayor of a neighbouring municipality, so as to avoid discovery at the hands of the “magisterial body” and of the “public officers” who were now so eager to offer him a proof of their attachment.²

¹ Wrangel, 30, 31.

² *Vide* p. 5, *ante*.

CHAPTER XXV

WAGRAM

APRIL—JULY 1809

THE Prince of Ponte Corvo was now called away from Hamburg to Dresden in order to take command of a Saxon army which was to fight on the side of France in the approaching campaign against Austria. He felt indignant at being relegated—for the fourth time—to the command of foreign troops, and he became suspicious when he found himself the recipient of orders from the General Staff which were contradictory and out of time.

He believed himself to have been the object of deliberate injustice and detraction. His belief may have been exaggerated; but that there was some foundation for his complaints has been recognised both by English and French students of the subject.

“Napoleon,” wrote the English biographer of the marshals, “always took care that Bernadotte should never have under his command French soldiers. His troops in 1805 were Bavarians, 1807 Poles, in 1808 mixed Dutch and Spaniards, and in 1809 Poles and Saxons. Berthier, working out the Emperor’s ideas, and himself also hating Bernadotte, took care that in the allotment of duties the disagreeable and unimportant task should fall to the marshal.”¹

A French writer puts it as follows :

“Berthier was the principal instrument in these disloyal manœuvres against Bernadotte. Sometimes he leaves Bernadotte out of the general orders so as to place

¹ Dunn-Pattison, *Napoleon’s Marshals*, 80.

him in uncertainty how to move. Sometimes he sends him orders too late, so as to be able to insinuate that he had disobeyed them or executed them badly. Sometimes he alters reports so as to depreciate his reputation. Sometimes he whittles away the praise due to him so as to wound his *amour-propre*. In this way a system was perseveringly pursued of laying traps for Bernadotte's pride and sensibility."¹

The first of these passages contains some exaggerations. Bernadotte previously had been given some French troops in addition to his foreign contingents. Perhaps Napoleon, in allotting to him foreign troops, had been influenced to some extent by the marshal's well-known aptitude for managing troublesome soldiers. But he probably had other reasons also. Gossip in the capital was designating Bernadotte as a possible successor to the Imperial throne; and it looks as if Napoleon, at this stage of their relations, wished to use Bernadotte's military talents without enhancing his reputation or giving him the opportunity of attaching French soldiers to himself. Berthier could be relied upon to carry out these ideas with zest.²

The following extract from his letter to the Emperor makes it quite clear that Bernadotte's state of mind was feverishly suspicious and indignant.

" Marshal Bernadotte to the Emperor

" DRESDEN, 11th April, 1809.

" I have already had the honour of entreating Your Majesty to relieve me of the command of the Saxons. I have already explained to Your Majesty that I feel unequal to the task of leading foreigners. I eagerly await Your Majesty's kind assent to my prayer; for the treatment which I experience every day affects my morale very sensibly, and exhausts all the energies of my soul (*affectant mon moral de la manière la plus sensible, achève d'épuiser les forces que je trouve encore dans mon âme*). I came to Dresden without having received any instructions. The first letter containing orders, which

¹ Sarrans, i. 70, 71.

² " Il avait à craindre l'hostilité toujours vivace du major-général Berthier " (Pingaud, 85).

by the hazards of war might have been of the utmost importance, has been sent to me by post and takes sixteen days to reach me. All this, Sire, makes me tremble for the success of my operations, when I see my efforts perpetually paralysed by a hidden force over which I cannot prevail (*continuellement paralysés par une force cachée, dont il me serait trop difficile de triompher*). I implore Your Majesty to grant me my retirement, unless you will deign to employ me in some distant expedition, where my enemies would no longer be interested in persecuting me.

“ J. B. BERNADOTTE,
“ Prince of Ponte Corvo.”¹

Napoleon gave no immediate answer to this letter; and Bernadotte found a fresh cause of anxiety, when he had inspected his Saxon army, and had made himself familiar with their condition. They were gallant soldiers. But, in comparison with the disciplined armies of France and Austria, they were mere amateurs in military training. The marshal now bombarded the Emperor with letters protesting against being given an inefficient army, and warning him that the Saxon troops were not to be depended upon in any critical movement.

In the course of the next three months, Bernadotte wrote to the emperor six letters to the same effect.² For example on the 30th April: “The Saxons, I repeat, are not fit for an isolated action. There is not a single one of their generals to whom I could trust an independent operation.” On 6th May: “I experience every day more and more the necessity of the Saxon army being supported and stimulated into exertion by the example of some better disciplined troops.” On the 28th May: “The Saxons are, I repeat, quite incompetent to act as an independent corps. I cannot at present undertake any offensive operations without compromising the bridge of Linz. . . . I repeat that with the Saxons I can undertake nothing.”³

¹ Pingaud, 85; Sarrans, i. 122.

² Letters of 12th, 19th and 30th April, 6th and 28th May are all to this effect.

³ Sarrans, i. 123, 124.

Napoleon took no notice of these complaints. Probably he had his own reasons. We know from an historian of the campaign that rumours were rife that Fouché, in the event of a disaster to Napoleon, had marked out Murat or Bernadotte for the Imperial Crown.¹ Somebody had to command the Saxons, and it was obvious that their commander would have no opportunity of making a brilliant display. Napoleon humoured Bernadotte by flattery and vague hints of great rewards. For example, he wrote on the 19th April :

“ I have received all your letters. In the war upon which I am entering, I am supported by Russia, and you are marked out for something in that combination (*et vous êtes entré pour quelque chose dans cette combinaison*). Accordingly you will receive the command which I have assigned to you as a mark of my esteem and regard. . . .
“ NAPOLEON.”²

And again on the 2nd June, when Bernadotte renewed his warnings, the Emperor wrote :

“ MY COUSIN,—I have received your letter about the attitude of the Saxons. . . . Your corps is required for the battle which is about to take place. Be prepared, so that you may take your usual part (*figurer selon votre ordinaire*) in the approaching battle. NAPOLEON.”³

As his protests led to no response, Bernadotte finally sent an aide-de-camp, Colonel Lebrun, to Headquarters to remind the Emperor that he was leaving him with hardly any troops except Saxons. Napoleon, after listening to the colonel delivering his message, replied : “ But, Colonel Lebrun, does the Prince make no account of his own renown ? ” He could have said nothing that would be better calculated to appeal to the Gascon's love of glory, or to console him for not receiving the French troops for which he was clamouring.

On the night of 4th July the Grand Army crossed the

¹ Pelet, i. 100, 991 ; iv. 13 n., 19 n. ; cf. Sorel, vii. 336, 357–358.

² *Corr. de Nap.*, 15093.

³ *Id.*, 15423.

Danube and on the following day met the enemy at Enzersdorf in an engagement in which Bernadotte's Saxon army suffered two serious misfortunes. They penetrated Wagram at the moment that General Oudinot entered it from the opposite side. In the darkness Oudinot's men and the Saxons mistook each other for enemies. Owing to this mistake Wagram was retaken by the Austrians, and the Saxons suffered heavy losses.¹

This misadventure might have been effectually repaired but for another mishap. When Bernadotte sent for his reserve, it was nowhere to be found. It turned out that Marshal Berthier, the chief of the staff, had called it away to another part of the field without informing Bernadotte.²

Next day Bernadotte complained bitterly to the Emperor :

"Sire," he said, "you occupy too elevated a position to make it possible that you could wish to grudge anyone his share of glory. But an act of disloyalty or treason has gone near to deprive me of the fruits of thirty years of faithful service."

The Emperor replied that the calling away of Bernadotte's reserve was one of those errors that were inevitable in the course of critical operations. In his conversation with others, Bernadotte indulged in unguarded criticisms of the Emperor's strategy, declaring that if, instead of depriving him (Bernadotte) of his reserve, the Emperor had sent him 20,000 men, he would have been able to hold Wagram. He claimed that in this way he "could have averted the necessity of a bloody battle on the following day, and by a scientific manœuvre, he would have compelled the Archduke Charles to lay down his arms almost without a blow." These remarks were reported to the Emperor, who noted them for future use.

Next day was fought the battle of Wagram, in which the Saxon army was posted along the Danube, and had

¹ General Lejeune, *Mémoires*, i. 317, 318.

² Gourgaud, ii. 381.

to bear the brunt of an Austrian attempt to seize a bridge over the river. The Saxons were routed until Bernadotte succeeded in rallying them. While these operations were drawing away the enemy's main strength to the bank of the Danube, Napoleon hurled an overwhelming force under cover of a hundred guns at the enemy's centre, which won the victory and secured Napoleon's throne for another five years.

Bernadotte's share in the day's work is thus described by M. Léonce Pingaud :

"He [Bernadotte] had to sustain for a time the principal effort of the enemy. His Saxon troops failed again. He exposed himself bravely in order to rally them against the attacking force. Seven or eight of his Staff were killed or wounded ; and he had a narrow escape of death from a sword-thrust. Napoleon came in person . . . and helped to inspire some of his battalions."¹

No wonder that Bernadotte was overwrought and excited on the field of battle, and that high words passed between him and the Emperor. When the Saxons were routed Napoleon is said to have asked sarcastically : "Was this the scientific manœuvre by which you were going to compel the Archduke Charles to lay down his arms ?" Marbot adds that Napoleon dismissed Bernadotte from the field, and that the marshal in his despair sought death at the hands of the enemy.² But this story was a mere flight of Marbot's lively imagination.

It is true that some angry words passed to and fro on the battle-field. When an advance in mass formation had been ordered, Bernadotte told the Saxons to advance in open order, and shouted in the hearing of the Staff : "It is not my habit to allow men to be killed unnecessarily."³ He was said to have refused to obey an order forbidding any soldier to leave his post in order to remove the wounded from the field ; and to have

¹ Pingaud, 86 ; Alfred Rambaud, in his *Revue Bleue*, says that Bernadotte at Wagram "showed great bravery and ran serious danger."

² Marbot, ii. 273.

³ Sarrans, i. 133.

protested against the Saxon ambulance wagons being taken away to draw cannon. There is no doubt that the sufferings of the wounded were exceptionally severe in this terrible battle.

Bernadotte's military reputation was not damaged by the battle of Wagram. Having to meet a severe attack with a weak corps, he behaved with conspicuous bravery. But, after the battle, he got into serious trouble by talking wildly and by issuing an exaggerated Order of the Day.

In the evening he cheered his disheartened troops by declaring: "I wished to lead you to a field of honour. You have been face to face with death all the time. But they will not do you justice because you were under my command."¹ The chagrin of the corps was increased by the audacious mendacity of Napoleon's bulletin which estimated his killed and wounded at less than 6,000, which would have been a moderate estimate of the Saxon losses alone.

It was the custom for French generals to issue laudatory Orders of the Day to their troops which were known by the name of *ordres de jour flatteurs*.² No French general regarded himself as "on oath" on such occasions. It was usual for the general to "let himself go." On the present occasion Bernadotte issued an *ordre de jour flatteur* which surpassed all others of the kind. It ran as follows:

"Saxons, on the 5th July between 7,000 and 8,000 of you pierced the centre of the enemy's army and fought your way to Wagram in spite of the resistance of 40,000 of the enemy supported by fifty guns. You fought until midnight, and you bivouacked in the middle of the Austrian lines. On the 6th at daybreak you renewed the combat with the same perseverance. Amidst the ravages of the enemy's artillery, your living columns remained as motionless as bronze. The great Napoleon witnessed your devotion. He numbers you amongst his braves. Saxons, a soldier's fortune consists in doing his duty; you have nobly done yours."³

¹ Gourgaud, ii. 385.

² Guillon, 160.

³ Sarrans, i. 134.

This high-flown Order was well calculated to rouse the drooping spirits of the Saxon troops. But its account of the fighting on 6th July was quite inaccurate. If he had said that the Saxons had suffered heavily, and had rallied bravely after their rout, no objection could have been taken ; but to say that they were " motionless as bronze " was an amazing " inexactitude." No notice, however, would have been taken of the order, if it had reached no larger audience than the Saxon Corps. Unfortunately it was reproduced in the German Press, where it was magnified into a German legend that " Saxon troops had won the battle of Wagram." The French Press and the French generals naturally resented such a distortion of the truth ; and a storm burst over the head of the author of what was called the " Gasconade of Wagram."¹

The Emperor sent a circular to the marshals which he directed them to keep secret, as it might pain the Saxons. In this circular he testified his displeasure at the Prince of Ponte Corvo's Order of the Day, declared that he owed the success of his army to French troops and not to any foreign troops, and that the victory was due to Marshal Masséna and to Generals Oudinot and Macdonald and not to the Prince of Ponte Corvo. He also wrote to General Clarke,² the Minister of War :

" If you have any occasion for seeing the Prince of Ponte Corvo, please convey to him my displeasure at the ridiculous Order of the Day, which he has had published in all the newspapers. It is all the more out of place because he himself was complaining about the Saxons during the whole day. The Order of the Day contains other inaccuracies. . . . In truth that column of granite was constantly routed."³

Bernadotte returned to Paris " under a cloud." When he was spoken to by the Minister of War about his Order of the Day, he replied that he had issued it to encourage his disheartened troops, and that he regretted it had

¹ *Corr. de Nap.*, 18614.

² Afterwards Duc de Feltre.

³ *Corr. de Nap.*, 15595.

found its way into the newspapers.¹ He steadfastly maintained that he had been treated unjustly in the matter ; but he had few sympathisers except the Saxons, who always remained grateful to him. Their chief of the staff said that the marshal's "memory would never be effaced from the hearts of the Saxons."² This prophecy was verified five years afterwards upon an historic occasion in a very striking manner.³

One of Bernadotte's critics, Count Philip de Ségur, attributed this incident to the marshal's "irrepressible desire to win hearts and gain partisans on all occasions." M. Guillon is probably nearer the mark when he reminds his readers that all the generals of that day were in the habit of flattering their troops in their Orders of the Day.⁴ What happened on this occasion was that a Gascon general, with a very sore head and a very disheartened army, surpassed all his brethren in arms by publishing the most sensational and extravagant *ordre de jour flatteur* of his time.

It was characteristic of Bernadotte that he should have taken up the cudgels for the Saxons. He might reasonably have reminded Napoleon of his many warnings⁵ that the Saxons were inefficient ; and he might have said truly, "I told you so." But it was instinctive in him to identify himself with his subordinates in adversity. He had done so with his file as a corporal, with his regiment as a colonel, with his province as a Governor. He did so with the Saxon Corps as a marshal ; and we shall find him just the same when destiny leads him to a still higher station. After Wagram he stood up for the Saxons *contra mundum, contra imperatorem et contra veritatem*.

¹ Pelet, iv. 31.² Gourgaud, ii. 385.³ See p. 301, *post*.⁴ Guillon, 160.⁵ See p. 217, *ante*.

CHAPTER XXVI

WALCHEREN AND ROME

JULY 1809—MAY 1810

HARDLY had Bernadotte reached his home when Paris was startled by the intelligence that an English force had invaded the French Empire by landing on the Flemish island of Walcheren. It was aimed at Antwerp, which was Napoleon's naval base, and it was also intended to make a diversion so as to help the Austrians. Bernadotte lost no time in presenting himself to the Minister of War, booted and spurred, and tendering his services to the Council of State: "If I am offered only a company of veterans," he declared, "for the defence of the Empire, I shall not hesitate to accept such a command."¹

The Minister of War and the Council of State refused to employ a marshal who had just incurred Napoleon's censure. Fouché, on the other hand, who held the two offices of Minister of the Interior and Minister of Police, declared that the Prince of Ponte Corvo was the man best fitted to defend the Empire in an emergency. The Minister of War and the Councillors of State sustained a surprise when they received the Emperor's commands, blaming their inaction, and approving of the appointment of Marshal Bernadotte, Prince of Ponte Corvo, to the command-in-chief of an army, to which he gave the name of the Army of Antwerp.²

A M. de Rocca, who was serving in the Netherlands, has written an account³ of the Walcheren expedition from the French point of view. He says the French

¹ Pelet, iv. 322.

² *Corr. de Nap.*, 15633-15643, 15698.

³ De Rocca, *Walcheren*.

troops were only 12,000 and formed an indisciplined rabble until the arrival of Marshal Bernadotte, whose energy and talent seem to have made a deep impression upon this eye-witness. He describes how the marshal inspired confidence where it did not exist before, created order out of chaos, and made an army out of a mob. The historian Thiers puts it shortly that Bernadotte "made prompt and careful preparations for defence."

De Rocca gave a description of the impression which the English fleet made upon Bernadotte and his staff, as they watched it from a watch-tower on the highest point of Antwerp Cathedral. He compared the English fleet to an "immense collection of floating fortresses" sailing and turning "with such unity and symmetry that one might say that they moved to the rhythm of harmonious music."

De Rocca relates an amusing story. It appears that Bernadotte, while inspecting outposts, stopped at a cottage and was given a cup of milk by an old woman who, like most of the country people, disliked French rule. Bernadotte rewarded her with a gold coin. She looked at it with glad surprise and exclaimed: "The English have come at last! That's a good job!"

Meanwhile the deadly vapours of the island of Walcheren had come to Bernadotte's aid. Before the end of September the expedition had been defeated and dispersed by the force of pestilence. A fever-stricken remnant of the expedition returned to England, where the commanders were court-martialled. Fever and ague had made themselves Bernadotte's allies and had defeated his enemy.

The campaign was hardly over before Bernadotte once more incurred the Emperor's displeasure, and was recalled to Paris. He was not aware of the degree to which he had been subjected to surveillance. The Emperor had sent one of his aides-de-camp, ostensibly as bearer of a despatch, but with private instructions to report every day to the Emperor what was going on.¹ Fouché attached to Bernadotte an agent named Julian. The Minister of War

¹ *Corr. de Nap.*, 15707, 15709, 15710.

also placed a spy on the marshal's Staff, with these confidential orders: "We have reason to suspect Bernadotte of strange notions of an altogether extravagant ambition. So involve yourself in no affairs, sign nothing that would compromise you. Beware of traps." In this way the marshal was being watched by three Intelligence officers.¹

Fouché's agent took an early opportunity of sounding the marshal. It is not clear whether he was doing so as *agent provocateur* or not. "The Duke of Otranto,"² said Julian, "has told me to consult you about the present critical circumstances." "Critical circumstances!" exclaimed Bernadotte. "I see nothing critical about them. We have been victorious in Germany. Peace will soon be declared. I do not think the English have gained much by this expedition." "Prince," replied the agent, "the last news from Vienna announces that the Emperor is in very bad health and that his mental faculties are failing. In a word, the Duke of Otranto says that it is time to think of the safety of the Empire. He has charged me to tell Your Highness that people are generally looking to you to contribute to the organisation that can offer a permanent security to all Frenchmen."

The Prince replied to this compromising suggestion in terms which probably represented his normal attitude of mind towards his Sovereign. "If," he said, "I had to choose an Emperor, certainly I should not have given the preference to Napoleon. But since France has pronounced for him, I shall remain faithful to my engagements to the nation."³

Napoleon now recalled Bernadotte, giving as his ostensible reason that the marshal, in an Order of the Day, had described the force at his disposal as only 15,000 men. This was a generous estimate. But Napoleon said that "even if he had only 15,000 men, it was his duty to conceal that fact from the enemy."⁴

¹ *Corr. de Nap.*, 15707-15710; Pelet, iv. 18.

² Fouché had been created Duke of Otranto in 1808.

³ *Fouché*, par Madelin, i. 441, 446; ii. 47; cf. Pingaud, 90.

⁴ *Corr. de Nap.*, 15785.



JOSEPH FOUCHÉ.
Duke of Otranto

But the real reason for Bernadotte's recall is disclosed in Napoleon's correspondence. The Emperor complained that the marshal had received letters and emissaries from "the intriguers of Paris." He instructed Fouché to tell Bernadotte that "he has never seen a man or received a letter without my knowledge," and that "I am aware how little importance he attaches to it all, but to permit such men to write to him and to receive them is to encourage them."¹

The historian Louis Madelin, who has written the life of Fouché with great care and discrimination, thus hits off Fouché's attitude of mind towards Bernadotte :

"Fouché," he writes, "had been looking for a successor to the Emperor. Two names forced themselves on his attention, Murat and Bernadotte. These two brilliant officers, possessing popularity on account of their plebeian origin, more prestige and more independence than the others, and acquiring a sort of right of succession on account of their alliances with the reigning family, seemed to make . . . excellent instruments of government. . . . That is why these two cadets of Gascony loomed large in the eyes of the cold and cautious statesman. Hence sprang his singular association with Bernadotte in 1809."²

Madelin, in his life of Fouché, sketches Bernadotte. The portrait may be somewhat highly-coloured ; but it is worth quoting from, because the writer stands high both as an historian and as a biographer.

"Boastful and showy, extremely affable and very vain, but a brave officer and a distinguished leader in the field, he had known how to make himself necessary to the Emperor, who placed him above all his commanders by conferring upon him the high-flown title of Prince of Ponte Corvo. The Gascon accepted it without allowing himself to be disarmed. . . . Gracious, eloquent, vivacious, he won favour and popularity. As he was,

¹ Lecestre, *Lettres inédites de Nap.*, i. 361, 362 ; *New Letters of Napoleon*, 157.

² *Fouché*, par Madelin, i. 441.

in the opinion of many officers, and those not the least distinguished, the next best strategist after Napoleon, and as he retained the sympathies of Moreau's old soldiers and of a section of the Republicans, men predicted for him a brilliant future if circumstances should give him the opportunity. He . . . would never be satisfied with a servile place behind his master beside a Junot or a Duroc."¹

Napoleon, who wished to remove Bernadotte to a distance from Paris, now ordered him to repair to his principality of Ponte Corvo ; but Bernadotte refused to go, declaring himself ready to relinquish his titles and offices and to retire into private life. The Minister for War inquired whether the marshal wished him to report to the Emperor what he had said. " Yes," said Bernadotte, " and I am ready to verify it by my signature." " What ! " said Clarke, " do you put yourself into rebellion against the law ? " " God forbid," was the reply, " but I know how to distinguish between my military duties and my civil rights. The former make it my duty to attack without hesitation 100,000 men with 3,000, if I am ordered to do so. But, as a citizen, I have the right to fix my own domicile, no matter who chooses to assign one to me."²

The Emperor now offered him the command of the French Army in Catalonia, but the offer was not accepted. It was at this period that he is said to have declared defiantly : " The Emperor is a powerful man at Vienna, but he is not powerful enough at Paris to be able to make me leave it against my will."

When the Emperor was informed that Bernadotte was unwilling to go to Ponte Corvo or to Spain, he eased the situation by summoning him to Vienna, where some animated scenes are reported to have occurred. In the course of one of them Napoleon reproached the marshal about an armistice which he had accorded to the Swedes when he had been commander-in-chief in North Germany. Bernadotte excused himself by saying that the Swedes

¹ *Fouché*, par Madelin, chap. xviii, i. 105-127, 441-446.

² *Sarrans*, i. 186.

and the Poles were the only peoples in Europe that were really devoted to the Emperor. "What sentiment, then, have the French for me?" asked Napoleon. "The admiration which your astonishing successes command," replied the marshal. Napoleon was mollified, and patting the marshal's forehead, exclaimed, "What a head!" "You might add, Sire, what a heart! What a soul!" said the Gascon. "What a scene of comedy!" might have been the comment of an impartial listener.

During his stay at Vienna the Emperor informed Bernadotte that he intended to appoint him his representative at Rome with the title of Governor-General and an immense establishment. Napoleon was not ungenerous. He was willing to let Bernadotte's star shine in any other sphere except his own. But the marshal was not in a mood to be tempted even by so dazzling a post as the government of the Eternal City. When he declined the proposal, Napoleon, who obviously desired to remove him to a distance from Paris, replied:

"You have indeed won enough glory to justify you in seeking repose. I don't know why it is, but I see very well that we do not understand each other. My policy, however, requires that you should go to Rome, and hold my Court there. You will have a great position. I have assigned you two millions for your expenses as Governor-General. I only ask you to remain there for eighteen months. We shall have more direct relations with each other. Perhaps you will change your ideas."¹

Bernadotte had to yield, but he evaded immediate compliance with this command by requesting leave to take his wife to his favourite *refugium*, the waters of Plombières. His avoidance of such a brilliant opportunity was justified within a few weeks by an utterly unexpected event.

¹ Sarrans, i, 166; cf. Pingaud, 92.

PART V
CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN¹

1810-1818

¹ This period has been treated in greater detail in *Bernadotte and Napoleon* (John Murray, London), pp. 250-318, and in *Bernadotte, Prince and King* (John Murray, London), pp. 1-154.

CHAPTER XXVII

BERNADOTTE'S ELECTION AS CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN ¹

JUNE—SEPTEMBER 1810

IN June 1810, after six years spent continuously in campaigning and in governing conquered territories, Bernadotte found himself at home with Désirée and Oscar, who was in his eleventh year. Their circle included Désirée's sister, who had become Queen Julie of Spain, and Madame Récamier, who had fallen from a station of wealth to one of comparative poverty, but remained the admired cynosure of a brilliant entourage. In her *salon* were to be seen old faces wearing new masks, among whom were General Junot, who had become Duke of Abrantès, Marshal Masséna, who had become Duke of Rivoli and Prince of Essling, and Eugène de Beauharnais, who was now the Viceroy of Italy.²

Napoleon had recently divorced the Empress Josephine and had married the Austrian Archduchess Marie Louise. Among the foreign visitors to Paris was a Swedish general, Count Wrede, the bearer of the King of Sweden's congratulations to the Emperor. He made Bernadotte's acquaintance and a friendship sprang up between them.

Sweden had passed through a revolution in the previous year (1809), which had resulted in the dethronement and expulsion of the Swedish King, Gustavus IV. His uncle, an old and childless Prince, had been elected King and had been proclaimed as King Charles XIII; and a Danish Prince of the House of Augustenburg had been elected Crown Prince. Now came the news of the sudden

¹ For the purpose of this chapter use has been made of *Historiska Handlingar*, a Swedish collection of official despatches—cited in the notes as *H.H.*

² See p. 136, *ante*.

death of this young Prince and of preparations which were being made for the election by the Swedish Diet of another Crown Prince to fill the vacancy in the succession to the Swedish throne.

A few days after the arrival of this intelligence, Marshal Bernadotte was called upon by a young Swedish officer, Baron Otto Mörner, who had come to Paris as King's Messenger to inform the Emperor of the death of the Swedish Crown Prince. He brought to the Marshal a letter of introduction from his kinsman, Count Gustave Mörner, who had been Bernadotte's prisoner at Lübeck in 1806.¹ He described to the marshal the condition of public opinion in Sweden and took it upon himself to assure him that, if he would come forward as a candidate for the vacant succession, the Swedish nation would be proud to see him at their head. The young man gave Bernadotte a picture of the situation in Sweden.

Three candidates were in the field: (1) the Duke of Augustenburg, brother of the late Crown Prince, (2) the Duke of Oldenburg, a relative of the Czar of Russia, and (3) the King of Denmark, who was ambitious of becoming the Sovereign of a United Scandinavia. Neither the Duke of Oldenburg nor the King of Denmark had any prospect of success. The Duke of Augustenburg had the support of the King and the Court. But the army and the patriotic party in Sweden were not satisfied with the idea of electing a *roi fainéant*. They wanted a "man and a soldier." Baron Mörner assured Bernadotte that his government of Hanover and of the Hanseatic towns had gained for him a high reputation as an administrator in Northern Europe, and that his clemency towards his Swedish prisoners at Lübeck had made his name a household word in Sweden.

Bernadotte received his visitor's advances with a polite profession of admiration for the Swedish King and nation, and of his own unworthiness of such a high destiny. He said nothing that could be construed as a refusal, but was careful from the very start to lay down

¹ See p. 197, *ante*.

two conditions. He declared that he did not regard it as possible that such an offer would ever be made to him, but that, in any event, he would not accept it without the approval of the Emperor, and without being assured that it represented the real wishes of the King of Sweden.

Baron Mörner followed up his visit by the following letter which he addressed to the marshal :

“ PARIS, 25th June, 1810.

“ MY PRINCE,—Your modesty cannot shake my opinion, which I believe will be that of the wisest of my compatriots. Sweden does not need a Dane, or a Russian, or a boy whose long minority would do us an injury. . . . What our country requires is a Frenchman who will adopt our religion, who is known for his talents, for his courage, and for the esteem in which he is held by the august Emperor of France ; who belongs to the Emperor’s family, being brother-in-law of the King of Spain ; who has a son who will be able to replace his father without a regency, when Providence so ordains. I do not think that I am mistaken in anticipating that this view will be generally adopted, unless your great Emperor has other intentions as regards your future. But, if his wishes accord with those of the great majority of Swedes, and also of the army, he will render them a service which will place them under a lasting obligation to him. I am, with the most profound respect, Your Highness’s very humble and obedient servant,

“ BARON OTTO MÖRNER.”¹

When Baron Mörner told the Swedish General, Count Wrede, who was on the point of leaving Paris, of his interview with Bernadotte, Count Wrede sympathised with the desire of the Swedish patriots to have “ a man and a soldier ” as their King, and he was easily won over. He, like young Mörner, was attracted by the marshal’s career and personality. His independence of bearing towards the Emperor was regarded as a merit. They looked upon him as one who “ participated in the

¹ *H.H.*, 55.

prestige of the Napoleonic regime without being a servile instrument of the Emperor's policy."

As Bernadotte happened to have sent Count Wrede a pair of pistols as a farewell gift, the Count availed himself of the opportunity of calling to thank the marshal, who at once broached the subject of Baron Mörner's propositions and asked his opinion. Count Wrede told him that, while the Baron had no official mission, he was the interpreter of a genuine patriotic sentiment, and that, if the marshal were to become a candidate, he would unite a great deal of support.

Count Wrede mentioned three objections which were likely to be raised to his candidature, namely, his religion, his ignorance of the Swedish language, and his rumoured disagreements with the Emperor. Bernadotte replied that, as regards his religion, he "was born in the country of Henri IV, who had changed his religion when he became King of France, and he was ready to do what Henri IV had done."¹ He also alluded to his mother's Huguenot kinsfolk and to the favourable impression which the Lutherans had made upon him when he had been Governor of Anspach. He made little of the language difficulty and of his differences with the Emperor. Count Wrede gave him his personal support and encouragement.

Napoleon's first idea was to support the candidature of his only Scandinavian ally the King of Denmark. When he found that the King had no chance, he was disposed to support the cause of the son of the dethroned King Gustavus. When he found that this was a lost cause, his interest in the question languished, until it was revived by the news that advances were being made to a French marshal. He failed to appreciate that Bernadotte's personality had commended him to the Swedes, and he looked round for someone more attached to himself. He caused inquiries to be made as to the chances of at least five others of his entourage, namely, his brother-in-

¹ Henri IV said that "Paris valait bien la messe." A witty French writer said of Bernadotte that "La Suède valait bien un prêche."

law Murat, whom he thought of transferring from the throne of Naples, his stepson Eugène de Beauharnais, and Marshals Berthier, Masséna and Davout. When these suggestions were rejected, he thought of putting forward one of his nephews, Napoleon Louis or Louis Napoleon (afterwards Napoleon III), the sons of his brother Louis ; but the idea had to be abandoned, because it had no chance of acceptance in Sweden. It was not until Napoleon was forced to the conclusion that Marshal Bernadotte was the only French candidate who had any prospect of being accepted in Sweden that he began to favour the notion of his candidature.¹

The Swedish Minister in Paris, Count Lagerbielke, summed up Napoleon's mental attitude towards Bernadotte's candidature in the following words, and he was not far wrong :

“ I know that the Emperor has not thought of the Prince of Ponte Corvo as one whom he would choose for the accomplishment of his own designs (because he knows the noble and independent character of the Prince), but as one in whose favour there is the best chance of uniting the votes of the Diet.”²

A month passed before the Emperor had been driven to this conclusion. Having done so, he took the opportunity of challenging the marshal on the subject at a levée. Bernadotte responded by coming forward and asking the Emperor to tell him frankly whether his election would be consistent with His Imperial Majesty's policy, adding that unless it would be so, he (Bernadotte) would prevent any further steps being taken in his favour. The Emperor replied : “ Do nothing of the kind. Let things take their course. It is consistent with my policy and with that of Sweden that you should be placed there.”³

Again, while the election was pending, Bernadotte, in the presence of a Court circle, begged the Emperor

¹ Cf. *H.H.*, 99, 114 ; Metternich, *Autobiography*, ii. 443.

² *H.H.*, 248.

³ *Ib.*, 263, 265.

not to take in bad part an important question which he wished to put to him, and proceeded :

“ If your intention is to keep Sweden in a state of dependence . . . I beg of you to think no more of me in this matter. Such a position would be contrary to my feelings as well as to my political convictions. If that is your intention, it would be better for Your Majesty to have to do with a Foreign Prince.” ¹

The Emperor replied that no question of that kind would ever arise, and that he desired nothing except to see Sweden an independent ally of France. These declarations of the Emperor left Bernadotte free to follow his destiny. Thenceforward Napoleon gave a covert support to his candidature but abstained from giving it a public countenance, so as to avoid embroiling himself with Russia.

Meanwhile, Baron Mörner's audacity in approaching Marshal Bernadotte without any official authorisation had been punished by his arrest and by an order to return to garrison duty. It was true that he had acted without authority. But he had rightly interpreted Swedish public opinion. Bernadotte wrote to the young man :

“ I have heard with much pain, Baron, of the annoyances to which you have been subjected on my account. Be persuaded that I shall lose no opportunity of proving to you the sincerity of the sentiments with which I shall always remain, Baron, your affectionate friend, J. BERNADOTTE, Prince of Ponte Corvo.” ²

The Swedish Minister in Paris, Baron Lagerbielke, had been a friend of Bernadotte's and of his family, and a frequenter of the marshal's house. Feelings of delicacy and of prudence kept them apart during the election crisis, until they met at a reception which was given by the Emperor after the marshal's candidature had been announced. Here Bernadotte went up to the Swedish Minister and delivered himself of a characteristic piece

¹ *H.H.*, 263, 265.

² *Ib.*, 252

of high-flown declamation, every word of which was reported by the Minister to his Government.

"Before we part," said the Prince of Ponte Corvo to the Swedish Minister, "I owe you a frank profession of faith. Look at my past career. Think of the position from which I started, and look at the position in which fortune has placed me. Do you suppose that a soldier of fortune, whose whole life, I dare affirm, offers no trait of ambition or of vanity, cannot be content with the degree of glory and of fortune to which favourable circumstances have raised him? He would be indeed insatiable to wish for more. He would be mad to aspire to the rank which is now in question. But he would be devoid of all feeling, if he were not touched by being honoured by the confidence of a nation such as yours, even if it were only a small minority of the nation. He would be a coward, yes, a coward—that is the word—if he were to refuse an honour because it was attended by risk, or to turn back from a path because it was bristling with obstacles and dangers."

The Minister, who was taken aback and at a loss for words, describes Bernadotte as continuing to address him with an accompaniment of "flashing looks and animated gestures" (*avec ses regards étincelants et son geste animé*).

"I am not one of the great people of the earth," he said; "I abandon myself to my destiny, but I shall never try to force it. I do not wish to compare myself to those brave men who seek death in battle, but I have made the resolution never to shrink from it. I offer my veneration to your respected Sovereign, my high esteem to the Swedish Nation. A love of right and fair play, rigid impartiality in the maintenance of order, the just recompense of merit, accessibility to all, leadership in battle, considerateness and sympathy with the people, these are the promises which I make, and I shall keep them. One word more. I receive many letters from Sweden. Every day they are sent to me through the principal houses of Hamburg. But I have not written

a single line. I give you my word of honour that I shall contract no new ties, whatever the result. I feel an undying gratitude for the King and for the Nation, as well as for those who have honoured me by their good wishes.”¹

The Swedish Minister, when reporting the conversation to the King of Sweden, added: “With these words the Prince of Ponte Corvo disappeared in the crowd, thus sparing me the embarrassment of having to make a reply.”

Bernadotte threw himself into the contest with characteristic energy. Being at a distance from the field of battle, he organised, through his old friends at Hamburg, a special system of express post by *estafettes*. The Swedish Minister was surprised to find that the marshal was “incredibly well informed” about all that was going on in Sweden, and that he became aware of important events before they reached the Swedish Legation.² As the other candidates had their electioneering machinery, he engaged the services of an unofficial agent, a M. Fournier, an Ex-Vice-Consul of France at the Swedish port of Gothenburg, who seems to have served him very efficiently.

Bernadotte’s financial position did not compare unfavourably with his rivals. His income from his employments and dotations was about £16,000 a year; and his wife had inherited a fortune from her father. The other candidates were reported to have behind them the treasuries of Russia and of Denmark; and Bernadotte, who received from Napoleon at least a million francs in compensation for relinquishing his French endowments,³ was able to give assurances that he would not come to his adopted country in the character of a penniless adventurer. In the matter of personal prestige he had the advantage. A history of his campaigns and achievements was circulated and aroused a great deal of public interest and enthusiasm. The portraits of the marshal himself, and of his wife and son, were displayed everywhere. Very

¹ *H.H.* 261-274.

² *Ib.*, 262.

³ *Corr. de Nap.*, 16906.



PRINCE OSCAR BERNADOTTE.



THE CASTLE OF ÖREBRO.

popular with the multitude was a picture representing little Oscar playing with his father's sword.

The Swedish Diet assembled at the Castle of Örebro on 21st July for the election of a Crown Prince. The Diet was composed of four Houses, representing respectively the Nobles, the Clergy, the Burghers, and the Peasants. The King favoured the candidature of the Duke of Augustenburg, and was supported by the Court and by many nobles and statesmen of the old school, prominent among whom was General Adlercreutz.

On the other hand, Marshal Bernadotte, Prince of Ponte Corvo, was the people's choice. His career and his personality appealed to the army and to the masses. His was the only name that excited enthusiasm. It was applauded at public meetings and was toasted in the cabarets. The deputies from the province of Ostrogothia, to which the " Lübeck prisoners " belonged, made themselves conspicuous by their praise and support of the marshal.

The tactics of the Court party were cleverly devised and executed. They said nothing in disparagement of Bernadotte personally. But they laid stress upon the danger of finding in the French marshal an instrument of Napoleon's oppressive commercial policy, and of the invasion of Sweden by a crowd of French adventurers and place-hunters. They also made the most of his notorious disagreements with the Emperor.

The army was on the Marshal's side and their opinion of him found expression in a letter of General Count Wrede, who had known him in Paris.

Letter of Count Wrede

" Do you wish to know my opinion of Marshal Bernadotte ? I entertain for him a profound esteem, not only as a soldier and statesman, but as a private individual. *Vox populi, vox Dei*. Good father, good husband, faithful in his friendships, he is adored by those who form his entourage. A certain independence of character is probably the cause of the rumours of his disagreements

with the Emperor. I have often seen them together without ever remarking anything of the kind. Everybody knows the regard which Napoleon has for him. He is the only Frenchman I have found among the generals in Paris, for the other generals have the German air which is so stiff and disagreeable. To raise to the throne of Sweden a Prince without force of character and eminent qualities would be to degrade Sweden from the rank of an independent nation. . . .”¹

The last sentence of Count Wrede's letter represented the prevalent feeling of the Diet. But the King, towards whom there was much sympathy and loyal attachment, remained unconvinced. In these circumstances some Councillors of State requested Count Suremain, the King's Aide-de-Camp, to inform the King that in their opinion the time had come to yield to the force of circumstances and to the tide of public opinion. Suremain found the King in a harassed and despondent mood after a sleepless night. A dialogue ensued, the following extracts from which will indicate the reason of the King's objections and the considerations which overcame them :

“*Suremain.* It is natural that Your Majesty should be upset. I earnestly hope that a crisis, so disastrous to your Majesty's health and repose, may be brought to a speedy conclusion.

“*The King.* How can I help being disquieted when the happiness of Sweden and my own happiness and repose are all at stake, and when I am at a loss to know whom to choose ? I had fixed my choice on the Duke of Augustenburg. He is my cousin, and the brother of the late Crown Prince. It now appears that he will not do. You have yourself spoken against him. At present they are pressing me with their Bernadotte ! They say the Emperor wishes it. Good Heavens ! If the Emperor wishes me to take a French general, surely he could do something more than leave me to guess at his meaning. Have you not told me that he did not like Bernadotte ?

¹ Vassy, *Le Suédois depuis Charles XII, etc.*, 336.

"*Suremain.* Yes, Sire. It was so well known in Paris last winter, that I was advised to see very little of him.

"*The King.* What do you think of him? Gustave Mörner praises him to the skies.

"*Suremain.* It is impossible for me to form an estimate of the character of one whom I have only met in society. He is a fine-looking man, very polite, and expresses himself with remarkable ease. His appearance and manner have an air of great distinction.

"*The King.* What! nothing that savours of the Revolution?

"*Suremain.* I could see nothing of the kind. He has a good reputation in France. He is not counted as one of the plunderers.

"*The King.* However good his qualities may be, don't you realise the absurdity of my taking a French corporal as the heir of my crown?

"*Suremain.* Sire, I agree. It shocks me as much as it shocks Your Majesty. But I realise the danger of being forced. They say that his party has become very strong in Stockholm.

"*The King.* Skjöldebrand's¹ reports speak of nothing else. He says that he cannot answer for the tranquillity of the city if Bernadotte is not elected. Bourgeois vanity would be flattered by seeing one of their class on the steps of the throne.

"*Suremain.* That is so, but they are also influenced by an honourable sentiment. Many of them think that a man of high military reputation might some day restore our national glory.

"*The King.* Bah! What likelihood is there of any question of war at present? It is rest that we want now. What does Adlercreutz say about this affair?

"*Suremain.* He thinks, and if your Majesty will allow me to express my opinion, I think also, that it is urgently necessary to take a definite line. Everybody is running to Count Wrede to see the portrait of the little Oscar. There is more excitement and admiration and enthusiasm than I thought a Northern people capable of.

"*The King.* You speak of my taking a definite line. You wish, then, that I should propose Bernadotte?

¹ General Skjöldebrand was Governor of Stockholm.

“*Suremain*. Sire, I desire nothing except to see your Majesty extricated from your difficulty. . . . Suppose, for example, that the enthusiasm in favour of Bernadotte were to become so strong in the different orders of the Diet, that Your Majesty after a long resistance were forced to yield. The struggle would be painful, and the defeat still more so. It would put you for the rest of your life in a disagreeable position towards your successor. That is to be avoided. It would never do to be forced.

“*The King*. Do you think that they could force me ?

“*Suremain*. Sire, think of the unhappy condition of our Kingdom and of Your Majesty’s age.”

As he left the Royal presence, the King said with emotion : “ I am afraid I shall have to drain the cup. God alone knows how it will end.”¹

The impression created on the King by *Suremain*’s arguments was strengthened by the fresh information which reached the King that Napoleon was covertly interested in Bernadotte’s success. A few days after the conversation with *Suremain*, the King himself volunteered to propose Bernadotte’s election, with the result that on Tuesday 20th August the unanimous choice of the Diet was cast in his favour. There was no opposition among the nobles. The other three orders displayed much enthusiasm. The peasants insisted on voting for him in the name of Bernadotte, not recognising him under his princely title. Their ardour was so great, that they had declared the unanimous result of their deliberation before the other three Estates of the Diet had begun to deliberate.

The Swedish Foreign Minister at once sat down and announced to the Swedish Minister in Paris that the King had proposed and the nation had accepted the Prince “ who has distinguished himself in so many feats of arms under the banners of the great warrior who now rules the destinies of Europe.”

¹ *Suremain*, par Ernouf, 237.



BERNADOTTE AND DÉSIÉE.
 Crown Prince and Princess of Sweden 1810.

CHAPTER XXVIII

BERNADOTTE CEASES TO BE A FRENCHMAN AND BECOMES A SWEDE

1810

ON the 4th September Count Gustave Mörner arrived in Paris as the bearer to Bernadotte of the formal act of election from the Diet and from the King. Count Mörner had been selected for his mission because he had been Bernadotte's prisoner at Lübeck in 1806.¹ Now he came to invite his former captor to be his future King.

Bernadotte at once requested Count Mörner to convey to the King his wish to be adopted as His Majesty's son, in order, as he put it, that he might be enabled "to render to His Majesty not only the obedience which is due to the Royal dignity, but also the filial submission in which duty is blended with natural affection."

Now came an incident which it is vital to remember in estimating the subsequent conduct of Bernadotte as Crown Prince of Sweden in his relations with Napoleon and with France. When the Letters Patent releasing him from his French nationality and allegiance were presented to Bernadotte he found that they contained a clause binding him never to bear arms against France. He unhesitatingly refused to accept the Letters Patent with this restriction, and declared that, if the Emperor insisted, he would withdraw his acceptance of the Swedish offer.

"I cannot," he said, "submit to the obligation which you propose. My election as Crown Prince of Sweden makes it impossible for me to contract any engagements that would make me the vassal of a foreign country. . . . (*Mon acte d'élection me défend contracter aucun engagement de vassalité étrangère.*)"

²

¹ See p. 198, *ante*.

² *L'Univers*, 305.

When Napoleon showed a disposition to insist, Bernadotte turned to him and said with characteristic promptitude and presence of mind : " Sire, would you make me a greater man than yourself by obliging me to refuse a throne ? " The Emperor hesitated and then exclaimed : " Very well, go, and let our destinies be accomplished." " I beg your pardon, Sire," said Bernadotte, " I did not catch what Your Majesty said." " Go," repeated Napoleon, " and let our destinies be accomplished." ¹

The objectionable clause obliging Bernadotte never to bear arms against France was then struck out of the Patent by the direct authority of the Emperor himself. When Napoleon's correspondence was published under the ægis of Napoleon III,² the evidence which would have confirmed the true version of this episode was not given, but it has since come to light.³ It explains what Napoleon said to Dr. O'Meara at St. Helena : " I cannot say that he (Bernadotte) betrayed me. In a manner he became a Swede, and never promised that which he did not intend to perform. I can accuse him of ingratitude, but not of treachery." ⁴ Upon this subject the Bonapartist propagandists, who have clung to the charge of treachery, have been less fair to Bernadotte than was Napoleon.

To Prince Metternich, the Austrian Ambassador, Napoleon spoke about Bernadotte's election in terms which did justice to the marshal's merits as a soldier, but underrated his talent for government :

" He [Bernadotte] has plenty of brains," said Napoleon. " I have always found this to be the case ; but he will have a great deal of difficulty in maintaining his position. The nation expects everything from him, he is the god from whom they demand bread ; but I cannot see that he has any talent for government ; he is a good soldier, and that is all. For my part, I am delighted to get rid

¹ Sarrans, i. 189 ; Pingaud, 105.

² In 32 volumes in 1858-1861.

³ *L'Univers*, 305 ; Pingaud, 105 ; Sarrans, i. 185. Cf. *H.H.*, 303, 314 ; *New Letters of Napoleon*, 100 ; Lecestre, *Lettres inédites de Nap.*, ii. 66.

⁴ O'Meara, ii. 364.

of him, and I ask nothing better than his removal from France. He is one of those old Jacobins with his head in the wrong place, as they all have, and that is not the way to keep on a throne. In any case I could not refuse my consent, were it only that a French Marshal on the throne of Gustavus Adolphus is one of the best tricks that could be played on England." ¹

At St. Helena Napoleon gave a different reason for having consented to Bernadotte's election. He told Montholon that he had been " attracted by the glorious vision of a Marshal of France becoming a King, a woman in whom he was interested becoming a Queen, and a godson of his becoming a Prince." ² He never pretended that he gave his consent for love or affection for Bernadotte.

At the French Court there was a crop of *on dits* about the Swedish election. It was said that Bernadotte had hesitated to accept, and that the Emperor had fixed his wavering resolution by saying sneeringly: " He will not dare " (*il n'osera*). A pretty story circulated that Prince Oscar had influenced his wavering mood by saying: " Papa, why will you not make that brave people happy? " It was said that the Emperor had dreamt that two ships were launched together on a stormy sea, and that one of them (Bernadotte's) had left the other (Napoleon's) to battle with the storm! ³

Some historians have referred to Bernadotte as a King of Napoleon's creation, in the same sense that Kings Joseph, Louis, Jerome and Murat were of his creation. That idea is erroneous. Napoleon's consent was necessary to Bernadotte's election, but it was Sweden that elected him. Napoleon would have preferred Murat, Beauharnais, Berthier, Masséna, Davout or one of his own nephews. On the other hand, some writers have come to the no less erroneous conclusion that Napoleon

¹ *Memoirs of Metternich* (Eng. Tr.), ii. 460 et seq.

² Montholon, *Notes et Mélanges*, i. 219.

³ Pingaud, 98, 105; Geffroy, 1294, citing Van Schenkel, v.; Sorel, vii. 455.

was quite neutral, and that Bernadotte was elected *ni grâce à lui ni malgré lui*. Perhaps it is correct to say that Bernadotte owed his eligibility and his popularity as a candidate for the vacant succession to his personal qualities and merits, but that neither he nor any other French candidate would have succeeded in achieving more than a second place without Napoleon's covert support.

Napoleon little thought that, by contributing to the election of Bernadotte, he was founding the most permanent monument of his era, and that it would be truly said a century later by a writer of great distinction that "the only trace of his (Napoleon's) reign now visible on the face of Europe is the Bernadotte dynasty in Sweden, which was not the direct result of conquest, nor the direct work of Napoleon." ¹

Let us select two of Bernadotte's farewell letters. To Madame Récamier he wrote ² :

"MADAME,—When leaving France for ever, I deeply regretted that your absence from Paris made it impossible for me to take your commands and to bid you farewell. . . . M. De Narbonne has been so kind as to undertake the duty of forwarding to you my homage. We have often spoken of you, of your estimable qualities, and of the tender interest which you inspire in all persons who approach you. Farewell, Madame. Receive the assurance of the sentiments which I have consecrated to you, and which neither time nor the icy North can ever extinguish.

"CHARLES JOHN." ³

His mind must have whirled with vague emotions and distant memories when he penned the following note to his brother at Pau :

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I send my Secretary to be the bearer of your Letters Patent as Baron. I hope that in

¹ Lord Rosebery's *Napoleon, the Last Phase*, 240.

² Récamier, *Souvenirs*, 165, 166.

³ Bernadotte took his adopted father's name Charles, and placed it before his own name John. As Crown Prince he was always called Charles John.

course of time the Emperor will grant me the title of Count for you. You will soon hear of the unexpected event which calls me to Sweden. I never formed such a wish or desire, but, since destiny calls me to succeed to the throne of the great Gustavus, I must answer the call without either pride or weakness. I embrace you. Your affectionate brother, J. BERNADOTTE.”¹

On the 27th September Bernadotte paid a last visit to his country house. With Désirée, he spent the 28th at Morfontaine as the guest of her sister, the Queen of Spain. On the 29th he made his final preparations for the breaking of the last link with the land of his birth; and on the 30th he said good-bye to France, and, leaving Désirée and Oscar behind, started alone on the greatest of his adventures.

¹ Wrangel, 107.

CHAPTER XXIX

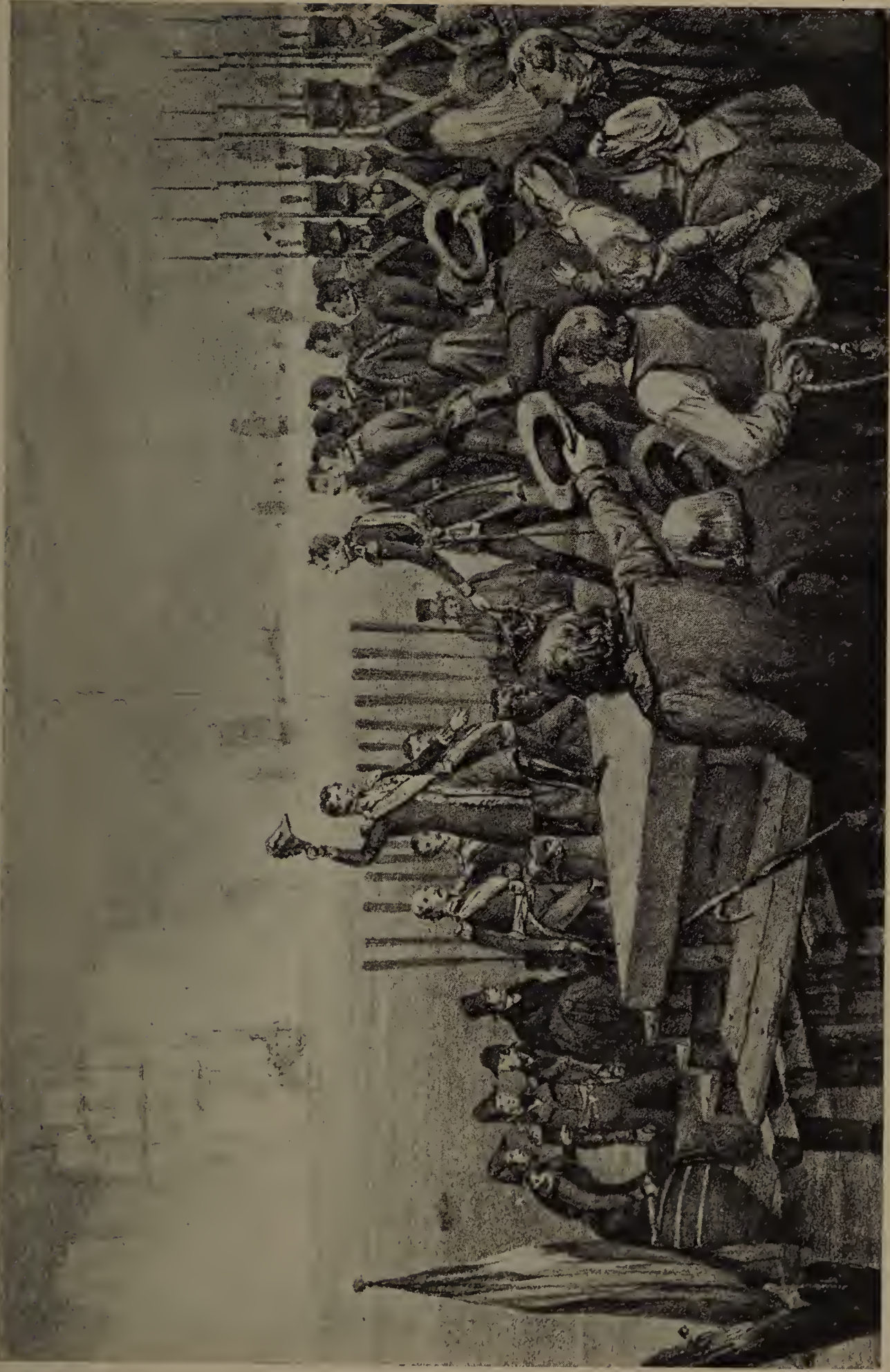
THE DÉBUT OF THE CROWN PRINCE

1810-1811

WHEN Bernadotte had accepted his election as Crown Prince of Sweden and had received his Letters Patent from the Emperor releasing him from his French nationality, he relinquished his Principality of Ponte Corvo, ceased to be a Frenchman, and became a Swede. He wore Swedish uniform at a farewell dinner-party given to him by Napoleon. He was surrounded by Swedish officers when he bade a ceremonial farewell to the Marshals of France. "A remarkable and touching scene," wrote the Swedish Minister who witnessed it. Under his new title of "Charles John, Crown Prince of Sweden," his departure from Paris was announced in the Paris journals of October 1st.

On the 20th October the Crown Prince landed on Swedish soil at Helsingborg, where he responded to an enthusiastic welcome in a speech which may be quoted as a fair example of his addresses of salutation to his new subjects. His ceremonial addresses had a personal touch about them. He did not employ a secretary to compose his public speeches. He composed his own speeches as well as all important documents of state. They did not represent an artificial *façade* of Royal conventionality. They were bricks with which he was building up a dynasty; and he made and laid them with his own hands.

"GENTLEMEN,—The Swedish King and nation have bestowed upon me a striking proof of their esteem and confidence. I have made every sacrifice in order to respond to it. I have left that France which has been the object of my existence until to-day. I have separated



THE LANDING OF BERNADOTTE AT HELSINGBORG, 20TH OCTOBER 1810.

myself from the Emperor Napoleon, to whom a lively sense of gratitude and an infinity of other ties have attached me. It is not the hope of a crown that can compensate me for such substantial sacrifices. No, gentlemen, I shall find my true compensation in the happiness of my new country. I come among you, throwing everything aside with an ardent desire to leave nothing undone that can contribute to your prosperity. I bring to the King, who is so deservedly beloved by you all, a boundless devotion. Let us unite, gentlemen, in the effort to fulfil his paternal wishes ; and let us preserve unimpaired that national glory which you owe to the valour and the virtue of his ancestry."

Next day, having received from a King's Messenger his brevet of appointment as generalissimo of all the forces of the Crown by land and by sea, the Crown Prince proceeded to Stockholm by short stages. His journey was a triumphal progress. At some points he walked for miles, accompanied by crowds of countryfolk who had come to meet him. At the centres of administration he stopped to converse with the provincial governors and other officials, or gave them seats in his carriage, and consulted them about the resources of their districts and the means of developing them.

Before the end of October the Prince arrived at Drottningholm, the country palace of the Swedish King. Count Suremain, the King's aide-de-camp, saw him crossing the ante-room with easy assurance and entering the Royal presence. A few minutes later a bell rang, and a messenger was sent for the Queen. After the Royal Family had remained together for some time, the door opened, and the King, having parted with the Prince, turned to Count Suremain and remarked with an expression of pleased surprise : " My dear Suremain, I have gambled heavily, and after all I believe that I have won." ¹

Bernadotte's first act of state was to receive a deputation of the Diet, which came to confirm his election. He referred to that event as a decree of Providence which

¹ *Suremain*, par Ernouf.

he felt it his duty to obey. "My soul has lifted me to the level of my new destiny. When I set foot on Swedish soil, I had already become entirely Swedish."

In the course of the next few days the Crown Prince made his state entry, and was solemnly instituted as heir to the throne in the presence of the King, the four Houses of the Diet, the official world and the foreign diplomatic corps. After the ceremony he delivered an address proclaiming his hatred of war, and his preference for a policy of peace and national progress.

"Bred in camps," he said, "I bring you a frank and loyal heart, an absolute devotion to the King, my august father, and an ardent desire to do all in my power for my new country. . . . I have seen war at close quarters, and I know its evils. Conquests cannot console a country for the shedding of her children's blood on foreign soil. I have seen the great Emperor of the French, crowned with so many victorious laurels, surrounded by his inviolable army, sighing for the olive branch of peace. . . . Peace is the only glorious aim of a wise and enlightened government. It is not the extent of a State's dominions which constitute its powers and independence, but its laws, commerce, industries, and national spirit. Sweden has sustained severe losses, but the honour of the Swedish name remains unsoiled."

The ceremonies which the Crown Prince attended and the speeches which he made would fill a volume. Let it suffice to quote the impression of a court lady, Madame Arfedson, who was a witness of the ceremony of Institution.

"His entry—how handsome, how tall, how commanding his look—very martial and stern, amid vast huzzas and the deep emotion of all ranks. His taking the oath of allegiance—he was placed on a Chair of State dressed in a blue and gold mantle, a coronet on his head, on the lowest step of the empty throne in the chapel. The King entered, much bent and weak with age. Bernadotte rose and met and supported him to the throne. Then, when the proclamation was read declaring him the King's only son, his starting up, throwing himself at the old man's feet,

and attempting to kiss his hand, but was paternally embraced. When the Oath was to be taken, his animated humility in casting away the coronet and swearing allegiance, and then his very grand and imposing manner of rising at once to address, and quite humble the nobles in an eloquent speech. His first look at them was of the kind which makes brave men tremble (*de quoi faire trembler les plus fiers*). Very encouraging to the peasants."

She added much about his sweet smile, and his simplicity of manner in society.¹ At first Bernadotte appears to have adopted an attitude of hauteur and of reserve towards the nobles and courtiers, in whose ranks there had been considerable opposition to his election as Crown Prince. His warmest supporters had been the soldiers, the middle classes, and the peasants, and he lost no opportunity of rooting himself firmly in their good opinions.

Napoleon, when he heard a report of Bernadotte's reception and of his speeches, said with a sneer: "What good will this ebb and flow of rhetoric do? The Swedes are Jacobinical and anarchical enough already. The Crown Prince does not understand how to manage them." But Napoleon understood the Swedes as little as he understood the Spaniards.

The Prince, at the beginning, refrained from intervention in politics, attending the Council of State without attempting to influence its decisions, and leaving the King to be guided by his Ministers. At this period he wisely devoted himself to taking advantage of the wave of enthusiasm with which his election had been received. He set himself to consolidate his popularity; to study his new field of action; to take the measure of the soldiers and statesmen by whom he was surrounded; to ascertain the sources of Sweden's wealth, and to decide upon the best means of advancing her prosperity and of placing his own dynasty upon a sure foundation.

The English Foreign Office was soon informed by its secret agents in Sweden that the transplanted tree was taking root in Swedish soil:

¹ *Correspondence of Sarah, Lady Lyttelton*, 161, 162.

“The Prince,” wrote one of its agents, “behaves with rare circumspection and leaves nothing undone to captivate and please. The bigwigs (*les grands faiseurs*) do not know where they are with him, because he says very little; and, as he knows nothing about the country, the reason of his reserve does him credit and tends to his advantage.”¹

The Crown Prince’s relations with his adopted parents were intimate and affectionate. He quickly became the life and soul of the royal circle, playing with grace and tenderness the part of the adopted son of the King and Queen, and interesting them by his vivacious conversation and by his diversified reminiscences.

It was currently reported in Stockholm that a powerful clique of political intriguers lost no time in inviting the Prince to displace the feeble old King, and to seize the Crown by a *coup d’état*. Bernadotte is said to have dismissed them, indignantly declaring that he would prefer to end his life at the point of the sword, than so basely to betray his duty. This story was repeated to Sarah, Lady Lyttelton,² when she visited Stockholm soon afterwards, and is confirmed by a report sent in March 1811 to the British Government from an agent in Sweden to the effect that hopes were entertained in Stockholm of “the death of the King and of the accession of Bernadotte, who has a strong following.”³

The following passage was written by the Queen in her journal two months after Bernadotte’s arrival:

“The King seeks every opportunity of showing his regard for the Crown Prince, and I begin myself to feel a high esteem for him. His manner and behaviour have gained my friendship, and the attitude which he has adopted towards the King cannot be sufficiently praised. A real son could not pay more attention and veneration than the Prince Royal does to the King. All his actions

¹ F.O., 73/61-64.

² *Correspondence of Sarah, Lady Lyttelton*, 161-162.

³ F.O., 73/62.

both to me and to the King and to all his entourage are such as to win the affection of the people, and he is beginning to be generally beloved." ¹

Even more remarkable was the favourable impression which he made upon the Queen-Dowager, mother of the dethroned King and widow of his predecessor. Rumours were rife then and afterwards of hostility on her part towards the new Crown Prince, and even of plots to poison " the usurper " of her son's throne. But in the winter of 1810 she was heard to describe Bernadotte as "*un Prince tout à fait aimable*," and to declare that his manners reminded her of the refinements of the Court of her young days, adding with a sigh: " When it is I who say that Sweden has made a happy choice, you may believe what comes from the mother of Gustavus IV." ²

Count Suremain, the King's aide-de-camp, who had experience of Court life both in Stockholm and in Paris, used to tell his friends that " upon everyone who approached him Napoleon exercised the empire of genius, Bernadotte that of grace, address and brilliancy (*de la grâce, de l'adresse et de l'esprit*). The former subjugated, the latter charmed." ³

A Finnish noble, Count Armfeldt, who visited Stockholm in the winter of 1810, has recorded the impression which the new Crown Prince made upon him :

" I have seen Bernadotte three times tête-à-tête and in private," wrote Armfeldt. " He is a man who, with an entirely military exterior, is a man of sense and of courage, who understands very well the great difficulties which surround his position. To begin with, there can be no doubt that he is firmly resolved to remain King of Sweden and to assure his throne to his Family. However ridiculous such an aim may be from the point of view of Sweden, it is a very natural one from his own point of

¹ *Journal of Queen Charlotte*, December 1810; *La Fin d'une Dynastie*, 487, 489.

² *La Fin d'une Dynastie*, 488.

³ *Suremain*, 233.

view. It is difficult of attainment, but is it impossible ? No ; and the means which he is employing are the only ones by which he can possibly accomplish it. In the first place, he is a brave and tactful soldier, who adopts the tone of comradeship with every military man. His first words with me were, ' General Armfeldt, there is nobody here but General Bernadotte ; let us talk like comrades.' That kind of thing goes a long way with soldiers, treated as they have been with indifference by the late King Gustavus, who was suspected of disliking the noise of the firing line." ¹

There is a letter of Armfeldt's in the English archives in which he expresses the opinion that—

" it will be possible for Sweden to regain her independence if the large views, the genius and the force of character of the man whom Fate has given her are not defeated by weakness and stupidity." ²

¹ F.O. (Sweden) 27th August, 1811.

² F.O., 73/76.

CHAPTER XXX

THE CROWN PRINCE'S FOREIGN POLICY—FINLAND OR NORWAY ?

1810-1811

THE problem which put Bernadotte's statesmanship and force of character to its supremest test was the passionate desire of the Swedish people to recover the lost province of Finland which by the Treaty of Tilsit had been transferred from Sweden to Russia. Its recovery had become the aim and the rallying cry of the Swedish National Party, who naturally expected the Ex-Marshal of France to lead a campaign of *revanche*.

Before leaving Paris Bernadotte had been heard to say that he knew that there was a party in Sweden which expected him to reconquer Finland. "But," he said, "to undertake a war with that object would be a folly to which I shall not lend a hand." A glance at the map will explain his reason. Finland was separated from Sweden by more than a hundred miles of sea, and was bounded for nearly a thousand miles by Russian territory.

Bernadotte was a peace-loving man, of whom it had been said that "without liking war he knew how to make it." He recognised that, if Finland should ever be regained and held by Sweden, it could only be at the ruinous price of a perpetual state of war. The impolicy of such a design as the reconquest of Finland was demonstrated when a mobilisation of troops, which had been authorised by the Swedish Diet, was met with resistance. The Prince had no difficulty in quelling the anti-mobilisation movement ; but the incident served to justify his objection to a policy which would necessarily involve the continuous maintenance of a large standing army.

The Crown Prince, however, realised that he must console his adopted countrymen by winning for them something else that would recompense them for the loss of Finland and would be worthy of his own reputation. He quickly made up his mind to make a united Scandinavian peninsula by taking Norway from Denmark and uniting her to Sweden.

This idea excited no enthusiasm in Sweden. But he was not discouraged. He resolved to divert public opinion from Finland to Norway ; and he set himself to persuade a nation which was almost unanimously against him. He argued that to create a compact peninsula, with the sea for its natural boundary, was to inaugurate an era of peace, and that to establish a state of war with Russia was "to put on a Nessus' shirt." It was an uphill task of statesmanship for this newcomer to force upon the Swedish people a policy which differed widely from their passionate predilections.

The idea of being monarch of a sea-girt kingdom captured Bernadotte's imagination. Soon after his arrival the British agents in Sweden reported that the annexation of Norway to Sweden was a "very favourite topic" of conversation with the Prince.¹ Before he had been three months in Sweden he had formed the fixed determination to pin his destiny to the acquisition of Norway. The idea of a sea-girt peninsula accorded with the French Revolutionary catchword "Natural Boundaries," for which he had fought as a young general in the Army of Sambre and Meuse.²

Bernadotte hoped to obtain Norway with the help of France. So he invited the French Minister³ to an interview at which he unrolled a map of Scandinavia and pointed to the "sea-girt peninsula" of his dreams. Napoleon's reply was a contemptuous *non possumus*. Norway belonged to Denmark ; and it did not suit him to make an enemy of Denmark. In a European war Denmark would be so near to his north flank that, for strategic reasons, he could not afford to quarrel with her.

¹ F.O., 73/68.

² *Vide* p. 16, *ante*.

³ Baron Alquier.

Napoleon's idea was to buy Sweden's alliance against Russia with Finland as the price. But Bernadotte had made up his mind not to involve his adopted country in a war in which success would be even more calamitous than defeat. Napoleon made the mistake of under-rating Bernadotte's statesman-craft and strength of purpose. He did not think him capable of carrying out such a far-seeing design as that of establishing his dynasty upon a basis of enduring peace. He did not suppose that the man, whom he had once described as a "wrong-headed Southerner," would be able to divert a northern nation from their desire for a Finnish *revanche*, and guide them along a safer and surer path.

Next to the Finnish problem, Bernadotte's greatest difficulty was the commercial blockade against England which Napoleon was enforcing under the name of the Continental System. The blockade against English commerce was so ruinous to the commercial interests of Sweden that a contraband trade had sprung up which the Swedish Government were unable, even if they had been willing, to stamp out.¹ Napoleon required Sweden to declare war against England or to face the alternative of war with France.

This ultimatum from Napoleon was brought before the first Council of State which the Crown Prince had to attend. Pleading his inadequate knowledge of the subject and his desire that no personal consideration affecting himself should influence the judgment of the Council, he asked and obtained leave to retire, and to return after they had arrived at a decision. As Sweden was unprepared for war, the Council of State advised the King to comply with the demands of the Emperor.

England, recognising that the declaration of war had not been a voluntary act, took the sensible course of ignoring it. Accordingly, the state of war between Sweden and England became so unreal as to be farcical.

Alquier, the French Minister in Sweden, reported to

¹ Bernadotte was heard to say, "I have no wish to become Napoleon's prefect or custom-house officer."

Napoleon : “ They are laughing at the declaration of war in London, and I have even detected them smiling at it in Stockholm.” He added that the contraband trade between Sweden and England was continuing in spite of the declaration of war. Napoleon now sent his cruisers into the Baltic, and carried on a campaign of piracy in Swedish waters, confiscating the cargoes of Swedish ships, and impressing their crews into the French service. He could not have treated the Crown Prince’s adopted country more contemptuously if she had been an enemy or a conquered province.

Meanwhile the Crown Prince wrote letter after letter ¹ to Napoleon pointing out the disastrous effect of the commercial blockade upon Swedish prosperity, the fatuous impolicy of the declaration of war against England, and the painful position in which the Emperor’s attitude towards Sweden was placing him. Upon the latter subject he wrote :

“ When I decided to accept the succession to the throne of Sweden, I hoped, Sire, that I should be able to reconcile the interests of the country which I have faithfully served and defended during thirty years with those of the country which had just adopted me. Scarcely had I arrived when I saw that hope destroyed.”

But Napoleon declined to enter into a personal correspondence with Bernadotte, excusing himself upon the pretext that he discussed State affairs only with Sovereigns or through diplomatic channels, and not with Crown Princes.²

In December 1810 an emissary of the Czar of Russia, Colonel Czernitchef, came to Stockholm. His ostensible mission was to urge the King of Sweden to adhere more energetically to the Continental System. After delivering his formal admonition to the King, he obtained a private audience with the Crown Prince, whom he informed that

¹ Letters of 19th November, 9th and 19th of December, 1810.

² *Corr. de Nap.*, 17916, 17936.

his mission, which had been undertaken under pressure from Napoleon, was a sham, and his admonition was a pretence. The Czar hated the Continental System and wished the Crown Prince to understand that, if Sweden was desirous of trading with England, Russia would not place any obstacle in her way.

Bernadotte responded by unburdening himself to Czernitchef. He depicted the cruel and embarrassing situation in which Napoleon had placed him, and the torture which it caused him to be prevented from repaying Sweden for the confidence which she had reposed in him. He declared that he had never stooped to be the servile instrument of Napoleon's despotic humour, and that he certainly would not yield to his capricious commands when a valorous nation had honoured him by choosing him as their chief. The interview lasted two hours, and ended in a statement by the Prince to the effect that Russia might be assured that he had become wholeheartedly "a man of the North."¹

Czernitchef, in his report to the Czar, described the dramatic expressions, the animated gesture, and the Gascon accent which accompanied the torrent of the Prince's conversation. He added that he recognised in the Prince the same traits which he had observed when he had seen him once before as a French Marshal among his troops on the banks of the Danube. "There was the same martial air, bright eye, and well-knit figure."

What struck Czernitchef most in Bernadotte was the perfect ease with which he played his new part. Czernitchef perceived "nothing of the *parvenu*, not a movement that was incorrect or out of place." With a quiet dignity he inspected his troops, and received the homage and acclamation of the people, as if he had been all his life exercising the duties of a Sovereign. He was also struck by the respectful deference with which he treated the King.

Alexander wrote to the Crown Prince thanking him for his reception of Czernitchef, and adding :

¹ Vandal, *Napoléon et Alexandre I*, 513-520 ; Geffroy, 554.

“ Having acquitted myself of my duties towards the Crown Prince, allow me to address myself to the man who is distinguished by his talents, his character and his principles. I desire not only your friendship but also your confidence ; I wish for them because my esteem for you is of long standing, and dates from the time you were only a general.”

This *rapprochement* with Russia did not yet involve any break with France. There were ominous clouds on the horizon, but Napoleon was still at peace with Russia, and was loud in his declarations of friendship for the Czar.

Before the end of January 1811 the Prince was joined by his wife and son. It was said that Napoleon used her as a diplomatic intermediary on this occasion.¹ The Crown Princess and Prince Oscar were cordially welcomed by the Swedes, and Prince Oscar was proclaimed Duke of Sudermania. Désirée's health suffered from the effects of a tempestuous voyage, and from the severity of a Swedish winter. Her husband's long absences on foreign service had accustomed her to regard Paris as her “ world,” and to make her home with her sister, the Queen of Spain. Her French retinue became discontented and encouraged her to look upon her life at Court as a gilded exile. Suddenly she packed up her belongings and returned with her retinue to her sister and to France.

The departure of his wife removed an intimate link with France. Another link was removed when the Emperor recalled the French aides-de-camp, who had followed him to Sweden. As a result of their departure he was left with no French familiars or companions except Prince Oscar, who remained with his father and was brought up as a Swede, and a foster-brother, Camps,² whom he took from Pau and created a Baron and a general. Camps was a Gascon, like his master, of whom he used to speak to visitors as “ we.” A wit observed that “ Camps will soon drop the Prince and speak of ‘ I.’ ”³

The Crown Prince's departing aides-de-camp carried a

¹ Pingaud, 129.

² See p. 3, *ante*.

³ Pingaud, 132.

letter to Napoleon expressing his desire to preserve the French alliance. He even lowered his demands by offering to be satisfied with the Northern Province of Norway, which was a poor and thinly populated district, declaring that he "would prefer to receive a single tree from France than a whole forest from any other Power."

Napoleon replied to these overtures by again insisting upon Bernadotte's co-operation in the war against Russia with the recovery of Finland as his reward.

"Let him," said the Emperor, "go straight forward, and seize the first opportunity of winning military glory for his country. The Prince has all the qualities to play such a rôle. He knows how to command an army, and he will be able to accomplish great things."

There was no prospect of any co-operation between them on these lines. A diplomatic storm arose when Baron Alquier wrote an intemperate note to the Swedish Foreign Minister, imputing treachery and falsehood to the Swedish Government and prophesying for the present dynasty the fate that had recently befallen the Vasas.

Bernadotte, who happened to be acting as Regent, dictated a stinging reply to Alquier:

"The climate of this country," wrote the Foreign Minister, "may doubtless disagree with you: and you may have formed a wish to seek another destination; but it was disloyal of you to provoke your removal by making assertions that are utterly groundless. . . . Those who are capable of the culpable design of provoking discord will always end by being unmasked."

Alquier refused to accept this scathing note, and demanded an audience, at which the Prince Regent took the opportunity of pointing out the painful and humiliating position in which Napoleon's policy was placing him, and closed his interview, in true Gascon fashion, with a declaration that "sooner than suffer dishonour, he would prefer to seek death at the hands of his grenadiers, or to plunge a dagger in his heart." At this moment Prince

Oscar entered, and Bernadotte, taking him in his arms, asked him if he would follow his father's example. "Yes, papa," said the child, upon which the Prince Regent turned to Alquier and exacted from him a promise that he would give the Emperor a verbatim report of their interview, and of all that he (Bernadotte) had said.¹

Napoleon, recognising that Alquier had brought upon himself these rhetorical avalanches by the initial mistake of writing an insolent note to the Swedish Minister, removed him from Stockholm, ordering him to exchange places with the French Minister in Denmark, whom he instructed to conduct business with the Swedish Foreign Minister and not with the Crown Prince.²

Bernadotte had as yet taken no step that was inconsistent with the preservation of the French alliance. From time to time he sent Napoleon useful information which had reached him from his agents in England and elsewhere. Courtesies were exchanged on the occasion of a birth of an heir to Napoleon's throne. Bernadotte sent the order of the Seraphim to the infant King of Rome, and he received from the Emperor a ring containing portraits of the French Imperial family.³

At this period the Crown Prince had three principal aims: (1) to win Norway, and, if possible, to do so with the aid of France; (2) to keep on good terms with France without ruining Sweden; and (3) to cultivate friendly relations with Russia and with England as the best guarantees of a permanent peace for Sweden. It was a prudent policy from his own and from the Swedish point of view, but it clashed with the aims of the man of indomitable will and of tragic destiny who had ceased to regard any point of view except his own.

¹ Alquier's despatches of August 1811; Geffroy, 566.

² *Corr. de Nap.*, 17916, 17936.

³ Cf. Pingaud, 137-138; Sarrans, i. 219-228.

CHAPTER XXXI

NAPOLEON ATTACKS SWEDEN AND FORCES HER TO BECOME THE ALLY OF RUSSIA AND ENGLAND

JANUARY 1812—MARCH 1813

IN January 1812 the storm broke, when Napoleon suddenly struck a deadly blow at Swedish pride and independence by ordering Marshal Davout to invade and to occupy Swedish Pomerania.¹ The objects of this act of war were to secure the safety of his left wing in the contemplated invasion of Russia, and to close the Pomeranian ports to British commerce.

Marshal Davout took pleasure in executing the Emperor's orders. Without any previous warning he invaded Swedish Pomerania, confiscated the Swedish ships in harbour, levied contributions upon the inhabitants, disarmed and disbanded the Swedish garrisons, sent some Swedish regiments as prisoners to Paris, and proceeded to appropriate the resources of the province to the Imperial Treasury of France.

These were open acts of war. Neutrality was no longer possible. What was the Crown Prince of Sweden to do? He had to choose whether to be hammer or anvil; and he did not hesitate to make his choice.

When the news of this grave act of aggression reached Stockholm, Bernadotte took up the challenge by sending envoys to Russia and England protesting against the invasion of Swedish territory and pointing out that it was part of Napoleon's design of universal domination. To the Czar he wrote :

¹ A considerable portion of Western Pomerania became Swedish territory by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, and had remained so ever since.

“ In the midst of this universal despair the eyes of men turn to your Imperial Majesty with confidence and hope. Allow me to remind Your Majesty that there is nothing comparable to the magic of the first instant. So long as strength lasts, success depends upon willingness to act. Those whose spirits are scared are incapable of reflection, and yield to the force which terrifies or attracts them.”¹

The Czar in his reply expressed a wish for an interview, and a desire to make the Crown Prince's personal acquaintance. He added very tactfully: “ You will always find in me a friend who will emulate you, but will never be the jealous rival of your glory.”¹

Napoleon now opened negotiations with the Crown Princess of Sweden, who was in Paris. Désirée prudently asked for a written memorandum, which she obtained and forwarded to her husband. Napoleon still insisted upon a Swedish alliance in the war against Russia with Finland as its price, and upon the maintenance of the blockade against English trade. He offered Bernadotte territorial aggrandisement in Russia and Germany, a magnificent subsidy and other pecuniary compensations.

Bernadotte treated these offers as utterly illusory. He did not want an aggrandisement which would involve Sweden in continental wars and entanglements. What he wanted was to create a peaceful Scandinavian peninsula consisting of Sweden and Norway. His last message to Napoleon was to reject the notion of recovering Finland and to insist upon the cession of Norway.

“ If Napoleon refused Norway, let him beware. Bernadotte would leave 40,000 men to guard Sweden, and would then march wherever honour and destiny might call him. Although in that event it would be an honour to become the rival of the Emperor, since Pompey, in spite of defeat, gained no little glory, still he should always prefer the honour of being his friend.”

Napoleon's reply was to point to Finland, and say: “ Let him march where both his countries call him. If

¹ *Corr. inédite d'Alexandre I et Bernadotte.*

not, do not mention him to me again." "As for the Swedes," he was heard to remark, "it is their destiny to be governed by mad kings. Their King was mad. They changed him for another, Bernadotte, who promptly went mad, for none but a madman could, being a Swede, ally himself with Russia."

We have now reached the end of May 1812. Whatever hesitation Bernadotte may have harboured hitherto, all doubt and irresolution were now at an end. Whatever domination Napoleon's prestige and pre-eminence had once exercised over him was now definitely cast aside. His throne, his adopted country, his son's future, his own reputation—his everything was at stake. Duty and interest pointed in the same direction. He had not crossed the Rubicon, but he was standing on its brink with his face towards the river. "Although I am proceeding against my own birthplace," he said to the Russian envoy, "I know of no way of saving Europe, except the defeat of the monster."

As a result of the invasion of Swedish Pomerania and of the invasion of Russia which immediately ensued, the *rapprochement* between Sweden and Russia quickly ripened into an understanding. The Czar now wrote to Bernadotte inviting him to an interview. "I shall go," wrote Alexander, "to whatever place Your Royal Highness fixes as a rendezvous."¹

Abo, the capital of Finland, was chosen as a meeting-place. It was a long trail—nearly four hundred miles by land for the Czar, and nearly a hundred and forty miles by sea for the Crown Prince. By going to such a rendezvous Bernadotte made it clear that he had definitely rejected the idea of recovering Finland from Russia. The Czar placed a Russian frigate at his disposal. But, as a gesture of national independence, he insisted upon crossing the Baltic under the Swedish flag. When it was represented to him that the Czar would be kept waiting, he replied: "Well, sir, the Emperor will have to wait. One who knows how to

¹ *Correspondance inédite d'Alexandre I et Bernadotte.*

win battles is entitled to regard himself as the equal of kings.”¹

The Czar welcomed his guest with a shower of compliments and decorations. Host and guest were well matched. Both of them were emotional, high-spirited, egoistic, with strange contradictions of character which were the result of early environment. Both were liberals in theory and disciplinarians in practice. Both had noble manners, grand ideas, fine sentiments, and a strong and real sense of public duty.

The conference at Abo occupied three days. Its proceedings followed the precedents set by Napoleon at Erfurt and at Tilsit. The Czar and the Crown Prince conversed freely, while their Ministers translated their conversations into a treaty and exchanged notes with each other. It was indeed a second Tilsit. The same chessmen were being moved about upon the same chess-board. Only one of the players was different. Ultimately the Czar promised Bernadotte to send thirty-five thousand men to Sweden, to be used for the conquest of Norway, and afterwards for creating a diversion in Europe against Napoleon.

Napoleon's invasion of Russia was proceeding successfully, and Alexander was apprehensive that St. Petersburg would fall into Napoleon's hands. Bernadotte, on the other hand, had no doubt that the invasion was doomed to disaster.

“Napoleon,” he exclaimed, “as if bent on suicide, has plunged into these immense solitudes five hundred miles from his frontiers disregarding every warning, taking no account of the character of his enemy, of the restless impatience of Europe, of time, of space, of climate.”

The Crown Prince then foreshadowed a diversion in France. If St. Petersburg should ever be in danger, he (Bernadotte) would descend upon Brittany and would march upon Paris. He would be received with open

¹ Pingaud, 162.



RING SENT BY NAPOLEON TO BERNADOTTE IN 1811.



CASTLE OF ABO, WHERE THE CZAR MET BERNADOTTE IN 1812.

arms. His appearance would reawaken the old enthusiasms of the French Revolution chastened by time and by experience: "Every friend of liberty will grasp me by the hand, and the result in France will be a constitutional monarchy, a republic, or—who can tell?"

The Czar seized the opportunity of stimulating Bernadotte's ambition and of giving it a direction and an aim. "I will give you," he declared, "eighty thousand men for such an enterprise. And I shall see with pleasure the destinies of France in your hands!" Bernadotte replied that it would not be at the head of Russian troops or as the Czar's lieutenant that he could achieve such a result.

The Czar was successful in tempting the Prince to dream of the French Crown; and the Conference did not close without an understanding that, if the choice of France should fall upon Bernadotte as successor to Napoleon, the Czar would be pleased and would co-operate. The idea was that, in such an event, Prince Oscar should succeed to the throne of Sweden.

The French diadem became for nearly two years an *arrière-pensée* at the back of Bernadotte's mind, colouring his thoughts. Yet it seldom influenced his actions. It never was more than an *arrière-pensée*. He never allowed it for an instant to divert him from his main purposes, which were the acquisition of Norway and the firm establishment of his dynasty in Sweden.

There can be no doubt that Alexander sincerely entertained the intention of making Bernadotte King of France, if circumstances should render it possible. He had no conflicting aim or interest. He feared Napoleon; he despised the Bourbons; and he shrank from the idea of a French Republic. A friendly, peace-loving soldier on the throne of France, and a long regency in Sweden under a boy King would have pleased him and suited his plans better than any other possible solution of these dynastic problems.

The Czar went so far as to suggest that Bernadotte

should divorce Désirée, and marry the Grand-Duchess Catherine.¹ This suggestion had a special significance because the Czar had refused to give a Russian Grand-Duchess to Napoleon. But Bernadotte would not listen to any such proposal. He made a "family pact" with the Czar; but only for the maintenance of the Bernadotte dynasty.

Bernadotte made a favourable impression upon the Czar by the prompt and gracious manner in which he yielded points upon which he might have insisted. When the Czar objected to giving a territorial guarantee, Bernadotte asked him whether his doing so would be badly received by his subjects. The Czar replied in the affirmative. Bernadotte at once relinquished the claim, and declared that he would rest satisfied with the Emperor's personal promise.

At a review of the troops which the Czar had undertaken to place at his disposal for the conquest of Norway, he astonished the Czar by suddenly turning to him and saying :

" I have reviewed the army which you offer me. They are splendid troops, the élite of your army. But you have more immediate need of them than I have. Your General Wittgenstein is defending the line of the Dwina like a lion; but he requires reinforcements. Send him these 35,000 men."

The Czar thanked him effusively, but demurred, and asked him how he proposed to acquire Norway without them. Bernadotte declared himself ready to postpone his Norwegian enterprise. In truth, the time was not ripe; and the postponement was politically prudent. The Czar knew it; but the generous gesture which accompanied this prudent act surprised and charmed him. He never forgot the handsome way in which Bernadotte had renounced the immediate advantage which had just been secured to him by treaty.

¹ Cf. Pingaud, 166, 167; Sarrans, i. 258, 259.

This incident helped materially to lay the foundation of a good understanding which was often tested and never shaken. The Conference of Abo led to a personal friendship between Alexander and Bernadotte which was founded upon a community of interests and was cemented by the attraction which the personality of one finished actor possessed for another. The alliance between Russia and Sweden could not have survived as it did if it had not been for the under-current of personal good feeling and understanding which flowed from their meeting at Abo.

During the autumn and winter of 1812 more than a dozen letters passed between Alexander and Bernadotte. Bernadotte's were full of confident advice and encouragement.¹ When Napoleon's opening manœuvres were successful, he wrote :

"Whatever the result of them may be, Your Majesty must not be alarmed. It is possible that Napoleon may win the first, the second, even the third battle, and that the fourth may be indecisive. Nevertheless, if Your Majesty perseveres, you will inevitably win the fifth."

When the Czar was despondent, Bernadotte foreshadowed a diversion after the manner of ancient Rome.

"Rome sent an army to Africa in order to drive Hannibal out of Italy ; and Mithridates, in the hour of defeat, clung to the hope of sending an army to Rome to demand peace from the Senate. If your Majesty is able to place at my disposal the promised army, the Emperor Napoleon, even if he should occupy St. Petersburg and Moscow, will be obliged to come in person before the month of May in order to defend himself on the banks of the Elbe and the Weser." ²

The capture of Moscow by Napoleon was generally

¹ All the letters which passed between them have been published under the title of *Correspondance inédite d'Alexandre I et Bernadotte*.

² *Corr. d'Alexandre et Bernadotte*, 35.

regarded as a Napoleonic triumph. Bernadotte alone dissented. He sent word to the Austrian Emperor that "Napoleon was lost."¹ And to the Czar he wrote that "Napoleon must be beaten in the end, because Your Majesty's armies can repair their losses, while his armies are at such a distance from their base that they cannot possibly count upon receiving reinforcements."

At last, when the French army began its disastrous and tragical retreat from Moscow, the Crown Prince evinced his sympathy with his former comrades in arms by sending 25,000 roubles towards their relief.

After Napoleon had evacuated Moscow, the Czar began to excuse himself from sending the promised army to Sweden. Bernadotte replied defiantly: "I have not thrown off the yoke of France for the purpose of submitting to the yoke of any other power on earth." Satisfactory assurances were given by Russia and the breeze died away.

Sir Neil Campbell,² who visited Stockholm at this period, gives, in his journal, the following impression of Bernadotte: "The Prince is about 5 ft. 11 in. in height, active, and well-made, with a handsome figure. His complexion is very dark, with black eyes and black hair, quite Spaniard-like. He is very popular here, as he evinces in every way a desire to become a perfect Swede." He describes a dinner-party given by the Prince, who wore the uniform of a Swedish general. Prince Oscar, a lad of thirteen, was in the light-blue dress of the Swedish light cavalry. When the boy retired his father put his hands on his cheeks and kissed him. Bernadotte, before retiring, went round the whole circle of the company, stopping a few minutes to talk to each individual. Campbell speaks of the Prince's "pleasing air, courteous manners, and great politeness without any affectation of stiffness or state."

¹ Cf. Madame de Staël, *The French Revolution*, cap. iv.

² Afterwards major-general. In 1814 he was appointed to accompany Napoleon to Elba.

CHAPTER XXXII

A WINTER IN STOCKHOLM AND A TREATY WITH ENGLAND

DECEMBER 1812—MARCH 1813

SOON after his return from Abo the Crown Prince came under an influence which was calculated to stimulate and spur him on. Madame de Staël came to Stockholm burning with wrath against Napoleon, who had driven her into exile. She was accompanied by her second husband, Rocca, and her three children.

Since the time of the Consulate, when she and Bernadotte had been implicated in the Conspiracy of Paris,¹ Madame de Staël had become famous by the publication of *Corinne*, the best of all her brilliant writings. She was now engaged upon a monograph on *Suicide*, which she dedicated to the Crown Prince in terms which offer a fair example of the adulation of which he was the object by those who appreciated and admired him.

“ My children and I, like Arab shepherds in the desert when they see a storm approaching, have sought shelter under your laurels,” she wrote. “ Until to-day I have dedicated my works to my father alone. I have applied to you, Monseigneur, to have the honour of doing homage to you, because your public life exhibits those genuine virtues which alone deserve the admiration of reflecting minds. Among brave men you are specially distinguished for dauntless courage, but that courage is directed by a no less sublime benevolence. . . . Frenchmen used to say that you combined the chivalry of republicanism with the chivalry of royalty. Indeed, wherever generosity can operate it is ever in you an inborn quality. . . .

¹ P. 143, *ante*.

If you persevere, Monseigneur, you will demonstrate to the world something which it has unlearned, namely, that those heroes are really noble who only think themselves superior when they can sacrifice themselves for others."

The sincerity of this eulogy was attested by Madame de Staël's conversation and correspondence. To the Duchess of Weimar she described Bernadotte as "the true hero of our age, because he unites virtue and genius, which in these degenerate days seem to have been divorced." "Never," she wrote to Camille Jordan, "have such eminent qualities been found linked with gentleness and a charm which sets the heart at ease." No wonder that, for several months, the *salons* of the Swedish capital were ruled by this clever woman whose cosmopolitan accomplishments earned for her the description of being "Swiss by origin, French by adoption, Swedish and Italian by her marriages, English in her political ideas, and German in her literary tastes."

Madame de Staël during her visit plunged so boldly into politics that Bernadotte bantered her with the suggestion that she was qualifying herself for appointment to the Swedish Council of State. It was at this period that she invented the battle-cry of "The Liberties of Europe," and when Bernadotte came forward as the "Liberator of North Germany," he probably derived that title from her fertile imagination.

Unkind people said that Madame de Staël was dreaming of a constitutional monarchy in France with Bernadotte as King, and that, in that event, she would not be satisfied until both Rocca and Désirée had been divorced, and "Corinne" had become Queen.

When she expressed a wish to follow her hero to the field of battle, Bernadotte gallantly replied, "If I were Charles VII, I should be tempted to ask you to play the part of Joan of Arc. But the battle-field is no place for you. Give me your pen as an ally; it will be worth 50,000 men in the scale."

She was fond of retailing the gossip of the Paris *salons*. One of her stories was that Napoleon, after he

had married the Archduchess Marie Louise, who was a niece of Marie Antoinette, used to speak of "my uncle Louis XVI." "No," said Bernadotte, "he has too much pride ever to have said anything of the sort."

Meanwhile, Napoleon was reproaching Bernadotte for his failure to support him, and was blaming him for his defeat. "St. Petersburg," he exclaimed, "was at the mercy of a Swedish patrol, yet Bernadotte did nothing save dream of making himself Emperor in my place."

But Bernadotte had not promised to support him; and the French throne had not been the motive of his policy, which was founded upon Swedish interests. It was true that, under the spell of the Czar's encouragement and of Madame de Staël's flattery, he was indulging in a dream of visionary splendour. Prince Oscar was to reign in Sweden, while he was to reign in France as a constitutional King, blending the principles of the French Revolution with the monarchical traditions of Henri IV. But it was a mere dream, a vague contingency which lurked at the back of his mind.

Among the foreign visitors in Stockholm was Colonel Hudson Lowe, who afterwards became better known as the jailer of Napoleon. He was on a mission from Lord Castlereagh to report upon the Swedish Army. The following extract from his Journal gives us a vivid word-portrait:

"We had the pleasure of dining with Madame de Staël yesterday. After dinner the Crown Prince entered, darting a glance at the company, and then glided away unperceived. I have never seen so remarkable a countenance as that of Bernadotte. An aquiline nose of extraordinary dimensions, eyes full of fire, a penetrating look, with a complexion darker than a Spaniard, and hair so black that the portrait-painters can find no tint dark enough to give its right hue."¹

Bernadotte put off taking the field until he had concluded a treaty with England by the terms of which Sweden was to contribute 30,000 men, under the com-

¹ Forsyth, 104.

mand of the Crown Prince, to the Army of the Allies, while England was to pay to Sweden a million a year as a war subsidy, to concur in uniting Norway to Sweden, and to secure the possession of the island of Guadeloupe to the Swedish Royal House.

The English diplomat who was mainly instrumental in bringing about this treaty was Sir Edward Thornton, who saw a great deal of Bernadotte and formed a favourable opinion of him. He discerned the force of character and fixity of purpose which underlay the surface of the Crown Prince's Gascon exuberance and he made allowances for the extreme delicacy of his situation. Another English agent was General Sir Alexander Hope, who was sent on a mission to report on the Swedish military forces. He wrote home that Sweden was a "rising country and was regaining its ancient spirit under the Crown Prince."¹

Lord Castlereagh, who stated that he valued the alliance with Sweden on account of "the well-known military talents of the fortunate Prince who had obtained direction of its affairs," closed the negotiations in a letter in which he recognised that Sweden was to obtain Norway before taking part in the general operations of the Allies, and expressed to the Crown Prince "my respectful good wishes for your personal glory and prosperity, in which I consider the best interests of the world to be at the present moment largely involved."²

Before the end of December the French Minister at Stockholm received his passports and a strong hint, followed by an order, to depart. Not many weeks passed before Napoleon dismissed the Swedish Minister in Paris with a note which attributed the rupture between France and Sweden to Bernadotte's ambition and individual hatred.

Bernadotte replied with a passionate denunciation of the ruin and the carnage in which Napoleon's ambition was involving Europe and France. He concluded with the following reply to the charge against himself of ambition and individual hatred:

¹ F.O. (Sweden), 73/79.

² Lord Londonderry's *Narrative*, 372.

“ I was born in that fair France which you, Sire, govern. Its glory and its prosperity can never be indifferent to me. But though I shall never cease to desire the happiness of France, I will defend with all my strength the rights of the people who have invited me to the succession of their throne, and the honour of the Sovereign who has deigned to call me his son. In State affairs, Sire, there is no room for personal affection or hatred. There are only our duties towards the people whom Providence has called us to govern.

“ As regards my ambition, it is great, I confess. It is an ambition to serve the cause of humanity and to ensure the freedom of the Scandinavian peninsula. To gain these ends, I rely on the justice of the cause which the King has ordered me to defend, on the constancy of this nation, and on the loyalty of our Allies. Whatever may be your determination, Sire, relative to peace or war, I shall not the less preserve towards Your Majesty the sentiments of an ancient brother in arms.”

Napoleon declared that he never received this letter. We know from the Castlereagh correspondence that Bernadotte showed it to the English Minister before despatching it. There can be no doubt that it reached Paris. It was easy for the Emperor to prevent its delivery; and the story runs that its bearer was imprisoned, and only obtained his release by the intervention of the Queen of Spain.

It suited Napoleon and his entourage to represent that Sweden had been embroiled with France as the result of the Crown Prince's animosity towards the Emperor. “ It is not against France,” they said, “ that Sweden takes up arms; it is Bernadotte who throws down the gauntlet to Bonaparte.” Such a notion does not conform with reason or with history. Napoleon kept out of the French newspapers the news of his invasion of Swedish Pomerania. The French people were left in ignorance of the true reasons for Bernadotte's break with Napoleon and were not made aware that Sweden would not have quarrelled with France if Napoleon had not forced her to do so.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE WAR OF LIBERATION—THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN

MAY—JULY 1813

AT the beginning of May 1813 the Crown Prince began to embark his army. In a stirring proclamation, he described himself as “quitting his King, his son, and his countrymen, not to trouble the repose of nations, but to co-operate in the great work of a general peace for which sovereigns and nations have sighed so long and so ardently.”

Bernadotte’s confident tone served to conceal many anxieties. As he had staked his fortunes, his popularity, his everything upon procuring the transfer of Norway from Denmark to Sweden, he naturally became alarmed when he ascertained that the Czar and Lord Castlereagh were angling for Danish co-operation in the approaching campaign.

His anxiety was aggravated by a message from the Czar, urging him to postpone his claim on Norway, which reached him at the port of embarkation.

The Czar’s messenger was Count Pozzo di Borgo, one of the most remarkable men of that era. He was a Corsican, who as a child had been a playmate of the Bonapartes. Somehow or other, there sprang up between him and Napoleon a vendetta which a local legend traced to a juvenile quarrel over a bowl of soup. When Corsica was annexed to France, Pozzo fled to England, thence to Austria, and finally to Russia, where the Czar took him up, made him a colonel and a Count, and employed him as one of his “roving diplomats.” As a Corsican he took a patriotic pride in Napoleon’s genius, but he hated the man; and the great Emperor had few more dangerous enemies in Europe than this comparatively obscure companion of his childhood.



ALEXANDER I, CZAR OF RUSSIA.

Pozzo di Borgo and Bernadotte were incongruous products of their time. Pozzo was that *rara avis*, a cosmopolitan conservative. His conservatism was the crust of experience and of conviction. He was more Czarist than the Czar and more legitimist than any Bourbon. Such a man could have no sympathy with the republican soldier of fortune, who had won the inheritance of one throne and was dreaming of the reversion of another. His dislike of Bernadotte was cordially reciprocated; and the two men had no aim in common except the defeat of Napoleon. Pozzo, when he wrote about Bernadotte, was always inclined to be sarcastic.

Pozzo, whose mission was to persuade the Crown Prince to postpone his claims on Norway, found him on the eve of embarkation. Their interview lasted long into the night and had no result. The Prince mounted a high horse, insisting upon the immediate possession of Norway, and upon the immediate sending of the Russian contingent which had been promised for that purpose. He reproached Russia with ingratitude. "Was it not I," he exclaimed, "who counselled your master how to defeat his invaders? Did I not save your capital by waiving my right to the Russian army which had been promised me? Have I not been the link which has brought Russia and England together?" Pozzo pleaded the urgent requirements of the emergency. But he pleaded in vain. Sweden had bargained to be paid in advance, and the Crown Prince was indignant at being asked to relinquish that advantage.

Here are Pozzo's first impressions of the Crown Prince. They are extracted from a confidential letter to the Russian Foreign Office:

"You will be curious to know something about the Prince's personality. He certainly possesses distinguished qualities and talents. As he says himself, he has never been unlucky at war. But the discipline and training of the Revolution reveal themselves in his manners. Discussions with him are always lively and unmethodical. He speaks with eloquence, but without arrangement.

L'amour-propre is displayed in every word. The sun never rises except by his advice. We spent the entire night in conversation. He mingles protestations of frankness and simplicity with a strong dose of finesse and boastfulness. When he perceived that I saw through him, he became natural and ended by speaking with emotion. He said: 'If I do not obtain Norway and if I do not reap success, a violent death must be my destiny. I shall leave my son to the guardianship of Swedish honour. Even as a private individual he will have from his mother an honest independence.' In truth the Prince is on the gridiron (*sur la braise*)."

Next day came from Paris a Swedish officer, Colonel Peyron, with a message from Napoleon and a letter from Désirée. The Emperor was "ready to forget the past, even Bernadotte's last letter" (the letter which he had denied receiving), "if his ex-marshal would remain neutral and confine himself to occupying and defending Swedish Pomerania." Désirée advised the same course for different reasons. She pointed out that Napoleon was doomed to failure, and that Bernadotte, if he remained neutral, would have the ball at his feet in France. "If you declare yourself against the French," she wrote, "you will lose the popularity which you enjoy among them. If Napoleon should fall, you might play a great rôle in France, and you might be the arbiter of a regency."

Désirée's advice came too late. The die was cast. Bernadotte had committed himself to his allies. His reply was to the effect that he had engaged himself to Great Britain and would adhere to the system of Great Britain; that, whenever Great Britain should judge proper to make peace with Napoleon, he would be ready to do so, but not until then.¹ He had put his hand to the plough, and could not look back. It was true that he had a second string to his bow. He had been encouraged by the Czar to indulge in what Frederick the Great once called "the most entrancing dream of a sovereign, that of being King of France." But, while he

¹ F.O., 73/82.

sometimes indulged in this day-dream, he never allowed it to divert his mind from the actualities of Swedish policy and of Swedish interests.

When the Crown Prince disembarked at Stralsund in Swedish Pomerania, he was met by disquieting news. Napoleon had gained a victory and was threatening to attack Berlin. The allied armies were in retreat, and there was no sign of the arrival of the troops that had been promised. Still worse was the confirmation which reached him of the unwelcome intelligence that the Allies were still pursuing the will-o'-the-wisp of a Danish alliance or neutrality, without stipulating for the cession of Norway to Sweden. It was natural that the Allies should wish to attract Denmark to their cause, but the idea was chimerical.

Bernadotte straightway sat down and penned an indignant letter to the Czar complaining of the non-arrival of the promised troops and reproaching the Russian Government with temporising over Denmark and with breaking faith with Sweden. He was heard to exclaim :

" The Emperor of Russia has betrayed me. The King of Prussia has betrayed me. They proposed to make me Emperor of the French ; and they have repeated that proposal recently. At my age, after having witnessed so many revolutions, I prefer to seek a retreat in Lapland, yes, in Lapland, than to reign over a people that has suffered degradation. I want nothing, I am content with what I have, and, if necessary, I shall declare to Europe that I am retiring to Sweden with my army." ¹

To the Swedish King he wrote a few weeks afterwards :
" Up to the present England alone has kept her engagements. Russia has only sent me 4,000 horse, and the King of Prussia has not sent me a single battalion."

The Prince, as was his habit, talked wildly but acted prudently. He grasped the Danish nettle by bringing about the despatch to Copenhagen of a mission from the

¹ Cf. Pingaud, 199, 200.

allied nations so as to put the Danish intentions to the test. The sending of this mission had the effect of bursting the bubble of a Danish alliance. The King of Denmark declined to allow any of the four emissaries to land on Danish soil, and refused even to negotiate with them. After this incident nothing more was heard from the side of the Allies of patching up an alliance with Denmark ; and in a few weeks the Court of Copenhagen definitely declared itself on the side of Napoleon. In this way one of the Prince's grounds for anxiety was removed.¹

At the same time the Crown Prince began to realise that, although his Allies had stipulated that he should acquire Norway before taking part in a continental war, this stipulation was one upon which he could no longer insist. It had become impracticable for the Allies to help him in such an enterprise. They had to fight a victorious French army led by the greatest soldier of the age, and they could not spare a man for any secondary purpose. Of necessity he found himself constrained to waive his treaty rights.

Hardly had he consented to postpone his claim to the immediate acquisition of Norway when a fresh cause of anxiety arose. News reached him that Russia and Austria had agreed to an armistice and to a conference at Prague. England and Sweden were not to be represented at the Conference because they had not yet taken the field. The reasonableness of his anxiety is evidenced by Wellington's expressed opinion that such a conference afforded Bernadotte no sufficient guarantees for what was due to him. Sir Edward Thornton, who was then British Minister at the Swedish Headquarters, warned Lord Castlereagh that there was a serious danger that Bernadotte's confidence in his Allies might be weakened, and that his enthusiasm in their cause might wane. It was felt on all sides that an interview between the allied chiefs might lead to a better understanding.²

¹ Lord Londonderry's *Narrative*, 389, 390.

² Wellington's Despatch, 4th August, 1813 ; Castlereagh Despatches, viii. 399.

The Crown Prince now received an invitation to an interview with the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia at the Castle of Trachenberg in Silesia, where he was welcomed by the Czar and by the King as "a member of the family of Kings" and as "one of the great captains of the age" with such cordiality that his ill-humour was quickly dissipated. He at once placed his twenty years' experience of French strategy at the disposal of his allies. His advice, at the conference, was to wear down Napoleon by Fabian tactics; to work up public opinion against his tyrannical projects; always to refuse battle when the Emperor commanded in person; and to seize every opportunity of fighting his lieutenants.

The conference of Trachenberg lasted four days, and resulted in a convention embodying a concerted plan of operations. "The warmth of the great Gascon's manner," wrote Mr. Holland Rose, "cleared away the clouds." It is generally admitted that it was Bernadotte who dictated the plan of campaign, and that his personality was the guiding and cementing influence in the deliberations of the conference.¹ At the same time, the Conference had the effect of strengthening his friendship with the Czar. He knew how to make his influence dominant without appearing to domineer.

Good news was carried to Trachenberg by a courier from Spain, who announced Wellington's victory at Vittoria. Almost simultaneously came a personal letter to the Crown Prince from the Emperor of Austria:

"I learnt," he wrote, "that you are on the Continent with your army in the ranks of the coalition. This intelligence has decided me to join the coalition, if the Emperor Napoleon rejects the peace which I have proposed to him."

Fifteen years had passed since Bernadotte, as ambassador of the French Republic in Vienna, had demanded

¹ Lord Cathcart wrote from Trachenberg on 12th July: "The plan of campaign proposed by Bernadotte has been agreed to." F.O., 66/86.

his passports from the same Emperor, and had left his capital amid scenes of excitement which nearly precipitated the outbreak of war between Austria and France.¹ The whirligig of time had now brought them into the same camp.

The plan of Trachenberg contemplated the concentration of two armies. One of them, the Army of the North, was to number one hundred and twenty thousand men, and was to be under the independent command of the Crown Prince of Sweden. The defence of Berlin was to be his main and immediate aim. If Napoleon should attack either army, the other army was to fall upon his rear and his communications. Leipsic was named as the place where the final blow was to be struck.

Bernadotte, at Trachenberg, endeavoured to persuade his Allies to agree that France should not be invaded but should be allowed to retain its "natural boundaries," including the Rhine frontier. This proposal was utterly unacceptable to them. For the present they side-tracked it as being premature.

Upon his return to his headquarters in Swedish Pomerania Bernadotte received a letter from Madame de Staël, from London, informing him that she had seen the Prince Regent, Lord Castlereagh, and Mr. Canning, and that they had spoken in the highest terms of the Prince of Sweden. "English Society," she wrote, "has flocked to me ever since my arrival. But I regard Sweden as my country, because it is your fiery glance that is my fatherland. May God grant you victory in the approaching war!"

¹ See p. 76, *ante*.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE WAR OF LIBERATION—THE DEFENCE OF BERLIN

JULY—SEPTEMBER 1813

THE armistice continued for a month. Bernadotte utilised it in preparing for the defence of Berlin, the burden of which was to fall upon his army. The task before him was a tremendous one. His position was extremely hazardous. His line of advance lay between half a dozen strong fortresses which were held by Napoleon. He was separated from Sweden by sea, and his communications with the sea were threatened by the Danes and by an army under his deadly enemy Marshal Davout. "The Army of the Crown Prince," wrote the Swedish Marshal Stedingk, "was encircled by fortresses, by the sea, and by the army of Napoleon. At the same time Denmark was a double source of danger, because she joined forces with Davout."¹

The Prince now came into close touch with two remarkable men—Sir Charles Stewart, an English general who had been sent to him by the English Government, and General Moreau, the French general whom Napoleon had banished to America in 1804.²

Sir Charles Stewart³ was an officer of distinction who, before the age of thirty-five, had reached the rank of major-general. After doing good service on Wellington's staff in the Peninsula he had been selected to represent Great Britain at the Prussian Headquarters, and to maintain a liaison between the British Government and the Crown Prince of Sweden.

Sir Charles Stewart, on the evening of his arrival, dined

¹ Stedingk, iii. 220, 221.

² See p. 155, *ante*.

³ Half-brother of Lord Castlereagh, and afterwards 3rd Marquess of Londonderry.

with the Prince, and had a long audience after dinner. His first impressions, which subsequently were modified and became decidedly more favourable, were described in a letter written on the following day, to his brother Lord Castlereagh.

“ The Prince Royal strikes me as being thoroughly French, *cœur et l'âme*. His engaging manners, his spirited conversation, his facility of expression, and the talents which are perceptible even on a first interview, made no great impression on me, because I was prepared to meet all this. I rather regarded him as a highly finished actor ; and I doubt if he is, in the long run, a character either to admire or confide in. On the contrary, I should even be disposed to watch him narrowly ; and the shifts and adroitness he can display and possesses, would make me, even when sure of him, on the *qui vive*. I may judge him harshly, but I never can look up to him, nor shall I ever think him sterling till I see him spill Swedish in drawing French blood. . . . Certainly throughout the whole of his conversation I remarked a disposition principally to secure Swedish objects . . . and he clothes himself in a pelisse of war, while his undergarments are formed of Swedish objects and peace. England will retain him as long as it is for his advantage to be retained, but there is no natural link between him and his present Allies. . . . I should not forget to mention that the news had arrived of the division in the House of Commons on the Swedish treaty. You have fought this admirably ; the Prince was in raptures, and you are his greatest favourite.” ¹

In forming a judgment upon this interesting letter, and upon the relation between these two men, it is worth remembering that Sir Charles Stewart's birth, breeding and environment offered a striking contrast to those of the Gascon soldier of fortune who, in a disordered community and by a revolutionary ladder, had climbed to the steps of a throne and to the command-in-chief of an international army. It was inevitable that there should

¹ Alison's *Castlereagh and Stewart*, 632, 633 ; Lord Londonderry's *Narrative*, 76-78.



GENERAL SIR CHARLES STEWART, AFTERWARDS 3RD MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY.

be divergences of view and occasional misunderstandings which found expression in animated debates.

Perhaps Sir Charles, as he afterwards admitted, did not always make sufficient allowance for the extreme difficulties of the Prince's strategical and political position, and for his susceptibilities as a man of French blood. Sir Charles was Minister for England and maintained his post with uncompromising firmness and candour. The English general and the Swedish Prince had differences from time to time. But as they were both brave men, and, in a genuine sense, thorough gentlemen, their relations were frank, and, beneath the surface, never unfriendly.

Sir Charles Stewart accompanied the Crown Prince on a tour of inspection of the defences of Berlin and describes him as having been received “ more as a Conqueror after his Victories, than as a Prince who has yet to be crowned by his exploits.” Sir Charles perceived that his recent interview with the allied Sovereigns at Trachenberg had inspired the Crown Prince with fresh confidence and hope. “ His Royal Highness,” wrote Stewart, “ produced, as usual, his map, and talked eloquently and scientifically of the great combined operations we should be engaged in.”¹

Sir Charles gives the following account of his impressions during this period :

“ It is impossible to resist the fascination of his eloquent expression or to be indifferent to his insinuating tone and manner. . . . It requires some hardihood to be quite collected, and insensible to beautiful phraseology so as to discover the drift or solidity of the extraordinary man in whose presence you are at all times admitted and accosted as ‘ *mon ami*.’ To do His Royal Highness, however, justice, he was invariably kind and civil, particularly to me ; and when I mentioned the probability of my being at his headquarters during the forthcoming operations, he assured me I should always be *le bien-venu* ; but, at the same time, told me he never would agree, in any convention or treaty, to have British officers,

¹ Lord Londonderry's *Narrative*, 88.

especially general officers, placed near his person, . . . thus evidently showing that he would be extremely jealous of the idea of any counsel or control. All this I took in as respectful manner as possible.”¹

Sir Charles Stewart had formed a correct judgment in coming to the conclusion that Bernadotte, as a Frenchman by birth, could not suppress a shrinking from the shedding of French blood, and, as a Swedish Prince, was more concerned in upholding the interests of Sweden than those of other countries. On the other hand, none of the allied sovereigns was more determined to bring about the defeat of Napoleon and to liberate his own people and the rest of Europe from his harsh domination. None of them had so completely put his destiny to the touch to win or lose everything. Besides, he knew very well that if Napoleon should succeed, he (Bernadotte) would, in the words of a French historian, be treated by the conqueror “as an insolent vassal.”² A victory for Napoleon would mean the extinction of Swedish independence, and an unrelenting vengeance against the Swedish Prince. Nobody was more interested in driving Napoleon out of Germany than Bernadotte.

A very different man from Sir Charles Stewart was General Moreau, who arrived at Bernadotte’s headquarters and spent three days with him during this armistice. He had come from the United States to help the Coalition against Napoleon, who had kept him in exile for nine years. “I do not address myself,” he had written, “to the Crown Prince of Sweden, but to my former comrade-in-arms.” Apropos of this visit Bernadotte wrote to Lafayette: “If you and Moreau and I were suddenly to descend from the clouds in the Place Vendôme, we should run some personal risk, but it might perchance result in a revolution.”³

The two generals discussed the situation with the frankness of old comrades, and Moreau, who took a gloomy

¹ Lord Londonderry, *Narrative*, 88, 89 ; cf. Hans Kloeber, 377.

² Capefigue, ix. 505.

³ Lafayette, *Mémoires*, iii., App. v., cited by Pingaud, 209.

view of the perilous position of Bernadotte's army from a strategical standpoint, expressed the opinion that the defence of Berlin was futile and impracticable, and that Bernadotte was certain to be defeated.¹

Their conversations make an interesting dialogue, and serve to cast a light upon the difficulties which lay in Bernadotte's path. They also cast a light upon the differences between the two men. Both were first-rate soldiers. But the contrast between them in point of temperament and of force of character was very striking. Moreau's knowledge and prudence seemed to paralyse his will-power; while Bernadotte's caution sometimes seemed to brace his daring and resourcefulness. Both of them had displayed irresolution in 1799 and in 1803.² But Bernadotte's character, at that period, had been comparatively immature. He had learned a great deal since the days of Brumaire and the Consulate.

"*General Moreau.* Your line of operations is a dangerous one between the Baltic, the Elbe and Oder, with no base save Stralsund, surrounded by fortresses occupied by French troops. If you march to Berlin you will advance through a veritable death-trap to a city which is at the enemy's gates. . . . Your position may have political advantages. But it is another question whether it will pass muster strategically.

"*The Crown Prince.* Quite so, General. As a Swedish Prince I must hold the Stralsund line. Win or lose, it leaves me in touch with Denmark, with Norway, and with my latest Ally, England. I am not disposed to end my career in the marshes of Poland, or, like Charles XII, at Bender. I do not disguise from you the simple fact that, if my communications with Sweden are cut, it means the loss of my army and disaster to my country.

"*General Moreau.* I owe you my frank opinion. I think you will be beaten.

"*The Crown Prince.* I hope not, and I am resolved never to accept battle on unequal terms.

"*General Moreau.* Will you always be master of the situation? What good is Berlin to you? How are

¹ Sarrans, i. 321.

² See pp. 109, 144, 155. *ante*.

you going to protect a city which stands wide open and without any fortifications or natural defences ?

" *The Crown Prince.* Berlin is the heart of the Prussian Monarchy ; whoever possesses it will always have a great moral and material ascendancy. These are things worth possessing. Besides, it is the centre of the resources of North Germany.

" *General Moreau.* But it is close to the enemy's outposts.

" *The Crown Prince.* If Napoleon takes Berlin from me he will not obtain it cheaply. Besides, I shall always take care to steal a march on him. He will not catch me, although I may have to fall back on Stralsund, or on Rugen, or even on my fleet." ¹

General Moreau had a cold reception at the allied headquarters. As the allied commanders were unwilling to serve under him, he had to be content with the position of official military adviser to the Emperor Alexander. This arrangement was a futile one. The allied commanders ignored his advice. One instance will suffice. During the operations against Dresden he advised an assault on the city. The Austrian commander-in-chief said that he did not wish to destroy Dresden. " No wonder," replied Moreau, " that for seventeen years you have always been beaten." There was no genuine regret among the German commanders when, a fortnight after his arrival, he was killed by a cannon-shot which carried off both his legs and pierced his horse's body.

General Moreau's was a tragical ending. His only sincere mourner in the allied camps was his compatriot, Bernadotte, who paid honour to his memory, befriended his widow, and contributed a hundred thousand francs to the dowry of his daughter.

From tragedy the scene changes to comedy, when we come to what we should now call a " week-end party " at Strelitz to which the Crown Prince went on the invitation of the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. Among his fellow-guests were the Princess of Solms, the Landgravine

¹ Cf. Sarrans, i. 321 ; Pingaud, 211.

of Hesse-Darmstadt, the Duke of Cumberland, son of George III, who afterwards became King of Hanover, and Sir Charles Stewart. The Crown Prince expressed a wish that the Duke of Cumberland should command the Hanoverian troops. The suggestion was rejected by Sir Charles Stewart, probably on account of the Duke's unpopularity in England.

Some difficulties arose as to precedence, of which Sir Charles has left an entertaining record. He writes :

“ During the stay of the Crown Prince we had no little difficulty as to the etiquette of this small Court with the two Princes. The Crown Prince, as heir to the throne of Sweden, considered that he should take the *pas*. The Duke of Cumberland most properly and rationally could not brook the idea that one of his blood should give way at his uncle's Court to Bernadotte ; much less did he incline to cede the fair Princess who presided there. The old Duke of Mecklenburg, under these circumstances, entreated me to settle upon some plan for them to get from the *salon* to the dining-room. After some reflection I proposed that the two ladies of rank present, the Princess of Solms and the Landgravine of Darmstadt, should go out together and that the two Princes should follow hand in hand. This was adopted after considerable difficulty ; but the Duke of Cumberland soon assumed his just rights, and took the first place by the Princess, which the Prince Royal not only perceived, but resented, by showing extreme ill-humour during the dinner.”¹

It is plain that in this social skirmish the ex-marshal was obliged to submit to being out-manœuvred by the English Duke.

On the day of the termination of the armistice (10th August) the Prince left Swedish Pomerania in order to take part in the defence of Berlin, which was threatened by a French army of 70,000 men under the command of Marshal Oudinot. Napoleon had planned an artful trap for the Crown Prince. Marshal Oudinot was to cut him off from Berlin, and Marshal Davout, operating from

¹ Lord Londonderry's *Narrative*, 91.

Hamburg, was to cut off his retreat to the sea and to Sweden.¹ The Prince, however, was on his guard, and was determined not to be caught in a trap. He now selected a very favourable position about ten miles south of Berlin near the village of Grossbeeren, and awaited Marshal Oudinot's attack.

After a few days of skirmishing the French army advanced in three columns, which somehow or other lost touch of each other. Bernadotte took advantage of the enemy's blunders. The French were out-numbered and out-manœuvred, with the result that the village of Grossbeeren was carried and the enemy utterly routed with a loss of more than 20,000. The Crown Prince threw the brunt upon the Prussian contingent, who were defending their own capital; and it was to them that he attributed the result in his bulletin. To the Crown Prince himself was due the credit of having chosen an advantageous position and of having directed the movements which led to victory. Alison says that "he took his measures with great judgment."²

It soon became known "from a cloud of intercepted letters, that the Prince's victory at Grossbeeren had produced an astonishing effect upon the enemy's morale." Berlin was saved. Napoleon's manœuvre had been foiled.³ Some Saxon prisoners, mindful of Bernadotte's conduct after Wagram in 1809, now offered to organise a Saxon legion for the Crown Prince's army.

Napoleon next superseded Marshal Oudinot, and appointed Marshal Ney to command a second thrust upon Berlin. Ney was the "bravest of the brave," and was a magnificent leader of a vanguard or a rearguard, but as a tactician he was no match for Bernadotte,³ who met him on 6th September at the village of Dennewitz.

At Dennewitz Bernadotte had to provide against a threatened attack from one of Napoleon's fortresses. While he was doing so, the Prussians held their ground

¹ Rose, *Napoleon*, ii. 333.

² Alison, *Castlereagh and Stewart*, ii. 50; F.O., 97/343.

³ Rose, *Napoleon*, ii. 250.

until, at the critical moment, the Crown Prince, in the words of Sir Charles Stewart, "with seventy battalions of Russians and Swedes, ten thousand cavalry and one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, advanced and obtained a complete and signal victory."¹ The effect of this victory was to render Berlin safe from further attack.

Here again the Prussians complained, as they had done after the battle of Grossbeeren, that they had been allotted more of the heat and burden of the day than the Swedes. But the Crown Prince's answer was that, as he was defending Berlin, the best troops to bear the brunt and to lead the van were the Prussians.

Two incidents occurred in the course of these operations which brought into strong relief the bizarre position which the Crown Prince occupied in relation to his former countrymen. On the march to Berlin the Prince and his staff, when they were passing the fortress of Stettin, the capital of Prussian Pomerania, were fired on from the walls. The French commandant, when asked for an explanation of the shot, replied, "It was a simple police affair. A deserter was signalled, and the guard fired."

After the battle of Dennewitz the Crown Prince, hearing that an aide-de-camp of his friend, Marshal Ney, had been wounded and was a prisoner, caused him to be the object of special attention. When he was sufficiently recovered, he obtained his release and made him the bearer of letters to several of the marshals, including Ney, Murat and Oudinot, urging them to use their influence with the Emperor for peace. When they mentioned the subject to Napoleon he was furious, calling them fools and traitors. This incident was followed by Murat's departure to his kingdom of Naples.

The Crown Prince's victories at Grossbeeren and Dennewitz had a marked effect upon Napoleon's German allies, who were beginning to be impatient of his imperious yoke. The Prince proceeded to issue a proclamation inviting the Saxons to join him, which annoyed Napoleon so

¹ Lord Londonderry's *Narrative*, 129, 130; *Cambridge Modern History*, ix. 529; Alison's *Castlereagh and Stewart*, ii. 62-64.

much that he ordered a man to be shot who was found circulating it. The Saxon generals informed Napoleon that they could not answer for the fidelity of the Saxon troops if they were opposed to the Prince, so great was his prestige among the Saxon soldiers.

Napoleon issued strict orders that no mention of Bernadotte should be made in the French Press. His motives probably were personal and dynastic. One of the effects of this censorship was to prevent the French public from appreciating the causes of the Swedish intervention in the war. The French were not made aware that Napoleon had invaded Swedish territory, that he had confiscated Swedish ships, that he had disarmed Swedish garrisons, and that he had appropriated the resources of a Swedish province. If they had known the truth and if they had realised its significance, the false legend which attributed Bernadotte's intervention in the War of Liberation to personal rancour and ambition might never have gained credence in France.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE WAR OF LIBERATION—THE BATTLE OF LEIPSIK

OCTOBER 1813—MARCH 1814

AFTER his victory at Dennewitz the Crown Prince advanced to Zerbst, an old fortress with towers and bastions overlooking the eastern bank of the Elbe, thirty miles from Leipsic. Here he was the recipient of many congratulations, one of which came from General Bennigsen, the Czar's Hanoverian commander. He had gained Bennigsen's regard by his lenient government of Hanover in 1805, and he had won his respect by out-manœuvring him at Mohrungen in 1807.¹ General Bennigsen wrote from the Russian Headquarters :

“ It is with sincere admiration and pleasure that I have heard, Monseigneur, of the great success of your army. These great and brilliant victories (i.e. the victories of Grossbeeren and Dennewitz), which have cost the enemy so dearly, justify my expectations to hear of nothing but victory wherever your Royal Highness commands.”²

Bernadotte had now reached one of the most critical moments of his life. The crossing of the Elbe meant for him the crossing of the riskiest of Rubicons. On the other side of the river was the French army, commanded by Napoleon, while behind him were the Danes, the troops of Davout, and a network of fortresses which threatened his communications with Sweden.

His allies, as a rule, cared very little what might befall him so long as he pulled their chestnuts out of the fire. They severely criticised him for not pressing

¹ See pp. 167, 204, *ante*.

² Bennigsen, iii. 296.

forward. But Sir Robert Wilson, who was at the Austrian Headquarters and shared the Austrian dislike of Bernadotte, did him justice when he wrote in his diary: "Although I do not like the man, I think the sacrifice of his communications is too much to require of him, and may affect his royal interests and security."¹ The best possible judge of the reasonableness of Bernadotte's hesitation was Napoleon, who made no secret of his opinion "that if the Prince should venture to cross the Elbe the war would soon be over."²

At his Headquarters the Prince was assailed by the Prussian generals with accusations of inaction, from which he defended himself so vigorously that Count Pozzo di Borgo described him as trouncing his critics "with the violence of a muleteer." By the word "muleteer" Pozzo alluded to the Spanish and Moorish strains in Bernadotte's temperament. The Prince was particularly "muleteerish" towards General von Krusemark, who had to plead indisposition in order to escape the torrent of his wrath.

While the Prince was passing through this hesitant mood, he received a trio of envoys from the Allied Sovereigns who were bearers of decorations in recognition of his recent victories. The envoys started on the same day, the Russian with the Order of St. George, the Austrian with the Order of Maria Theresa, and the Prussian with the Iron Cross, then a new Order only a few months old.

The Russian envoy had been commanded by the Czar to be the first in the diplomatic race, which he won by arriving at Zerbst twelve hours before the others. He was the Count de Rochechouart, a young aide-de-camp of the Czar's, a French *émigré* belonging to one of the historic families of France; and it was the information which he was able to communicate which put an end to Bernadotte's hesitation.

Bernadotte welcomed the young Frenchman, and was delighted that he had outpaced the others. "They were

¹ Wilson, *Diary*, ii. 124, 125, 160.

² *Corr. de Nap.*, 20680.



PRINCE BLÜCHER.

After the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence.

beaten in the race as usual," he said. "They did not know how to ride quickly. You outdistanced them. That is as it should be. You are a Frenchman, they are Germans." To Bernadotte this young French officer presented a very acceptable contrast to the Prussian and Austrian commissaries who surrounded him. They failed to understand him, and he failed to understand them. With the Prussians he was never at ease. They resented having to obey him; and he retaliated by not letting them forget that he had met them before. Had he not defeated them at Haile and at Lübeck? ¹

De Rochechouart was a fellow-countryman whom he understood and liked. To him the Prince unburdened himself with a freedom which the young Frenchman reciprocated.² They discussed the Prussian generals. The Prince spoke slightly of Blücher: "I knocked him into pieces at Lübeck," he said. He also gave free expression to his distrust of Count Pozzo di Borgo, whom he always spoke of as "that cunning Corsican." De Rochechouart had already had proof of the cunning of Count Pozzo who, on his arrival, had whispered in his ear, "Listen attentively to everything the Prince says, so as to be able to repeat every word to me."

The young officer felt very much embarrassed when the Prince, in a burst of confidence, suddenly revealed his *arrières-pensées* in reference to the succession to Napoleon's throne.

"France," he said, "does not want an Emperor. That is not a French title. France wants a King. But the King must be a soldier. The Bourbons are played out. They will never come to the surface again. What man would suit the French people better than myself?"

The young Count replied that he was not there to discuss such a question, and for this prudent answer he was afterwards commended by the Czar.

When de Rochechouart broached the real subject of his errand by suggesting that Bernadotte should follow up

¹ See pp. 192 and 197, *ante*.

² Rochechouart, *Souvenirs*, 245-247.

his recent victories by a vigorous advance against the enemy, the Prince gave the following frank description of the peculiar situation in which he was placed :

" Ah ! you must understand, my friend, that my present position is so delicate and difficult as to require the utmost prudence on my part. Quite apart from my natural repugnance to the shedding of French blood, I have my reputation to maintain. I have no illusions. My fortunes are staked on a single battle. Your Emperor and the Emperor of Austria call me their ' brother.' But if I were defeated, I might search Europe in vain to find anyone to lend me six francs."

De Rochechouart saw that, if he was to succeed in his mission, it must be by urging political rather than military reasons. So he set himself to convince Bernadotte that his reputation and his fortunes were in danger of being compromised by over-caution.

Having obtained permission to speak frankly, he told the Prince that all his Allies were saying that he was resting too long on his laurels, and that, if they should succeed in making the Czar believe that he had adopted a policy of calculated inaction, the consequence might be very grave. He went so far as to recall the fact that the young Pretender to the throne of Sweden, the heir of the Vasas, was a nephew of the Emperor of Russia, and to imply that, by holding back, the Prince might be risking the loss of Russia's support of his dynasty.

As a result of these representations, the Prince announced his intention of crossing the Elbe on the following day ; but he exacted a promise from de Rochechouart that he would not tell " the cunning Corsican," Count Pozzo di Borgo, the reason of his sudden change of plan.

On the following morning, when de Rochechouart presented himself to take his leave, the Prince advanced formally and handed to him a cross of the Military Order of the Sword, saying, " M. de la Rochechouart, this is what the Crown Prince of Sweden gives you." Then, conducting him to the embrasure of a window, he gave him a gold

snuff-box bearing his own portrait set in diamonds, and added, "This is what your compatriot Bernadotte begs you to accept." The young envoy tells us in his memoirs that it would be impossible to describe the amiable and graceful manner in which this little scene was enacted.

De Rochechouart, who tells us that he was much impressed by the Crown Prince's charm of manner and choice of expression, has recorded in his memoirs the following pen-portrait of Bernadotte as he saw him in October 1813.

"His [Bernadotte's] conversation," he wrote, "was refined, but was seasoned with a Gascon accent of the most pronounced kind. He was at this date forty-nine years of age. He was tall and striking in appearance. His eagle-like countenance recalled the great Condé. His abundant black hair harmonised with his dark Béarnais complexion. His cavalry uniform was, perhaps, a little too theatrical, but his reputation for sang-froid on the field of battle made one forget that slight defect. It would be impossible to meet a man more fascinating in his manners and conversation. He captivated me completely, and if I had been attached to his service I would have been sincerely devoted to him. Some people say that, in order to win people, he employs Gascon promises which he does not always keep. I saw no trace of duplicity or hypocrisy, but rather of a genuinely kind and generous heart."

The young aide-de-camp, who was accustomed to observe the staff work of the Allied Headquarters, was astonished at the ease and speed with which the Crown Prince, without the aid of a map or a note, dictated the orders of the day and the quartering of the various units of his army.¹

De Rochechouart, on his return from his mission, interested and amused the Czar by relating his experiences at the Swedish camp and by giving imitations of Bernadotte's Gascon style and accent. It appears that the Prince had betrayed his ignorance of the French peerage by addressing the envoy as "M. de *la* Rochechouart"

¹ Rochechouart, 245-257.

instead of "M. de Rochechouart." De Rochechouart showed the sincerity of his regard for Bernadotte by refusing to repeat the imitations, when requested to do so for the amusement of the Grand-Duke Constantine, who was offended by the refusal, and turned his back angrily upon the young aide-de-camp.¹

Meanwhile the Crown Prince kept his word by crossing the Elbe on 4th October and thus precipitating the climax of the campaign. A feverish fortnight ensued during which Napoleon frequently changed his plans, and the Crown Prince met each change with some corresponding movement. After a rapid alternation of marches and counter-marches, Napoleon made up his mind to accept battle at Leipsic. The Crown Prince's Headquarters were at Cothen, thirty miles away. The Prussian contingent under Blücher was in front, half-way to Leipsic.

Bernadotte's plan was to make the Prussian lead the van, while he was to advance in the second line, and to choose the right moment for striking the decisive blow. Blücher wished the Prince to come up and advance in line with him, thus covering his left wing. The Prince pointed out that this would involve his advancing with his flank to the enemy, which was the very manœuvre which had proved so disastrous at Eylau; and he declared that anybody who recommended such a movement was a "sot."

Sir Charles Stewart supported Blücher's advice, and joined the other foreign Commissaries in urging the Prince to press forward so that his name "might be for ever associated with the great result."

He wrote to the Prince: "Every minute is precious. The English nation has its eye on you. It is my duty to speak frankly"; and in a second letter went farther: "There is not an instant to be lost. . . . I speak as a friend and as a soldier. If you do not commence you will always regret it." On the morning of the 18th October they met and Bernadotte said to Sir Charles:

¹ Rochechouart, *Souvenirs*, 245-257.

“ Do you forget that I am Prince of Sweden and one of the first generals of the age ? . . . If you were in my place, what would you think if anyone were to write to you as you have written to me ? Do you wish us to remain friends ? You know the friendship I feel for you. Tell me your thoughts.” The interview ended in a cordial reconciliation.¹

Bernadotte, as was his habit, acted cautiously until the moment of action ; and then struck vigorously. He had timed his master-stroke. By a rapid movement he crossed the river which divided him from the enemy, drove them out of the outskirts of the city, and carried the suburbs after desperate fighting which ended only with nightfall. One of the turning-points in the battle was the desertion of twenty-two Saxon batteries to the side of the Allies. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of the Saxon chief of the staff in July 1809 that Marshal Bernadotte’s “ memory would never be effaced from the hearts of the Saxons.”²

The Prince exposed himself with his usual sang-froid. Count de Rochechouart, who was sent by the Czar to the Swedish Headquarters with a message, gave the following description of what he saw :

“ The Prince of Sweden received us, mounted on a big white horse. He wore a pelisse of violet velvet braided with gold, with white plumes and a panache of Swedish colours. He held in his hand a baton draped in violet velvet ornamented with gold. He looked superb, with shot and shell falling round him (*au milieu de la mitraille*), encircled by dead and wounded, encouraging by his presence a brigade of English artillery.”³

It was said that the Prince revenged himself upon Count Pozzo di Borgo and the Prussian and Austrian commissaries who had severely criticised his cautious tactics, by taking them with him everywhere during the day, which meant that they were nearly always under fire.

¹ Lord Londonderry, *Narrative*, 177 ; De Stedingk, iii. 227, 229.

² See p. 223, *ante*.

³ Rochechouart, *Souvenirs*, 261.

On the morning of the 19th the Crown Prince took a prominent part in taking possession of the city, and when the Allied Sovereigns met him in the square of Leipsic, they overwhelmed him with congratulations. The Czar embraced him, exclaiming, "You see we have kept the rendezvous which you named at Trachenberg." He was even more gratified when he learnt that Lord Castle-reagh, in the House of Commons, declared that "the Prince of Sweden had scrupulously observed his engagements."

It is difficult to steer a steady course between the extravagant praise and the extravagant depreciation of which the Prince now became the object. He was called "the Saviour of Europe" in one camp, and "a traitor to France" in the other. The German poet, Von Schlegel, referred to him as a "*cavalier sans peur et sans reproche*," who had "thrown down his gauntlet before the despot with a brow so serene and an air so noble as to recall the figures of Bayard and Duguesclin."¹ On the other hand, Sir Robert Wilson, who worked with the Austrians and Prussians and reflected their views, disliked Bernadotte on account of his Gascon style and air, distrusted him on account of his sympathies with the country of his birth, and referred to him disparagingly as a *parvenu*, a *fanfaron* and a "charlatan,"² who was suspected of leanings towards his old compatriots.

These suspicions were strengthened by his customary attentions to prisoners and wounded. He placed his purse at their disposal, and released 1,500 on parole. Most of them responded gratefully, but there were others who could not forget that the dominating causes of their defeat had been his preparation and execution of the Allied plan of campaign, and his well-timed appearance with a fresh army on the field of Leipsic on the 18th October. One of them, General Delmas, was said to have reproached him bitterly.

¹ *Leipsic Gazette*, October 1813.

² "Probably they called Bernadotte 'charlatan' because he was inclined to boasting," said Napoleon at St. Helena.



ENTRY OF THE ALLIED SOVEREIGNS INTO LEIPSIK, 19TH OCTOBER, 1813.

Napoleon afterwards, at St. Helena, complained that it was his ex-marshal who had "given to the Allies the key of his policy." The eagle saw itself fatally wounded by a shaft which had been plucked from its own plumage.

It was his intimate knowledge of Napoleon's strategy and tactics that explains the acute differences of opinion which caused so much friction between the Crown Prince and the other Allied commanders. They reproached him with cautious indecision ; while he criticised them for adhering to the same unwary methods of warfare which had enabled Napoleon and his marshals to defeat them one by one at Austerlitz, at Jena and at Friedland. He had studied, from behind the scenes, the arts by which Napoleon had won so many victories. Being pitted against the most famous and the most skilful captain of the age, and being familiar with every turn of that brilliant and subtle mind, he was convinced that without extreme caution and circumspection a complete victory could not be achieved.

Before the beginning of the campaign Bernadotte had said to General Moreau that he was "resolved never to accept battle on unequal terms."¹ This resolve remained unshaken to the end, in spite of the efforts of Napoleon to draw him on and of the Prussian generals to egg him on.

¹ P. 289, *ante*.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE FALL OF NAPOLEON—BERNADOTTE'S LAST VISIT TO PARIS

OCTOBER 1813—MAY 1814

AFTER the battle of Leipsic Bernadotte invaded Denmark and forced the King of Denmark to cede Norway to the King of Sweden. The cession of Norway was solemnly ratified by the treaty of Kiel. On his march he passed through Hanover, where he was enthusiastically received by the inhabitants, who remembered his former government of their country. For the next three weeks he loitered in Germany. This delay was due to the necessity of securing his communications with Sweden and to his reluctance to take part in the invasion of France.

To Sir Charles Stewart he frankly confided his "horror of the idea of the Cossacks desolating France," and his desire for "peace with the French nation, which he loved." Sir Charles blamed him for thinking too much of his sympathies with France as well as of his reputation in France, but advised the British Government that he should be humoured, adding that he "has some great qualities, especially in the grand projects of war, and he has played a distinguished card in public opinion, and his name has a certain magic which one must see the effects of to properly appreciate."¹

Bernadotte's position at this period was one of great perplexity. The defeat of Napoleon was necessary for the independence of Sweden; but, now that the independence of Sweden had been achieved, he naturally became pro-French in his sympathies.² He urged the

¹ Bernadotte respected Sir Charles Stewart, and, when his death occurred, spoke of him with feeling and with appreciation (F.O., 73-118).

² F.O., 64/91; Sarrans, ii. 131.



G. H. W. Goulden del.

The ALLIED BAKERS or The Corsican Tarts in the hole

Bernadotte.	Woronzow.	Blücher.	Emperor of Austria.	Wellington.
-------------	-----------	----------	---------------------	-------------

Allies to suspend hostilities, and to leave to France what he called her "natural boundary" of the Rhine. But the Allies would not listen to such a proposal.

After three weeks' hesitation, he occupied Cologne, where he was received by the same Mayor who had received him twenty years before as a general of the Army of Sambre and Meuse.¹ Before crossing the Rhine he issued a proclamation to the French people, which created a tremendous sensation.

"Frenchmen," ran his manifesto, "I took up arms by the order of my King to defend the rights of the Swedish people. Having avenged the affronts which they received, and having joined in the deliverance of Germany, I have crossed the Rhine. The vision of that river, on the banks of which I have so often fought victoriously on your behalf, impels me to express to you my innermost thoughts. All enlightened men cherish the wish to see France preserved. Their only object is to prevent her from continuing to be the scourge of the world. . . . Adopted son of Charles XIII, placed by the choice of a free people on the steps of the throne of the Great Gustavus, I can have in the future no ambition except to work for the prosperity of the Scandinavian Peninsula. Would that I might succeed, while discharging that sacred debt to my new country, in contributing at the same time to the happiness of my former compatriots."

This proclamation only served to aggravate his difficulties. The Prussians and Austrians were exasperated at being told that "all enlightened men cherish the wish to see France preserved." Napoleon, who saw his system of universal conquest and domination represented to his subjects as "the scourge of the world," took steps to prevent its publication in France.² Bernadotte's conciliatory language did not prevent the French people from regarding his crossing of the Rhine as a co-operation in an invasion of France. The rigid censorship of the Press had left France in complete ignorance of Napoleon's

¹ P. 23, *ante*.

² *Lettres inédites de Napoléon*, ii. 355.

invasion of Swedish territory, and of the true history and reasons of the intervention of Sweden in the War of Liberation. A contemporary French statesman is found writing :

“ We are informed here that Bernadotte has passed the Rhine. I never could have persuaded myself that this general could make war on French territory. We are living in extraordinary times.”¹

From the Rhine the Crown Prince moved to Liége, where he remained with his Swedes in the Netherlands, the rest of his troops having been summoned to take part in the advance upon Paris. He now was approached by emissaries both from the Bourbons and from Napoleon.

Ever since Bernadotte had declared himself against Napoleon, the Bourbons had cherished a hope that the ex-marshal might be induced to play the part towards their exiled “ King ” which General Monk had played towards Charles II. After the victory of Leipsic, they hit upon the idea of approaching him by means of a letter from the Prince de Condé, because of his well-known admiration for Henri IV, and for the House of Condé.

This arrow was well-chosen and hit the mark. “ A letter from the Prince de Condé ! ” exclaimed Bernadotte. “ Give it me at once. You could not present yourself to me under better auspices. That race of heroes has always been for me the object of a religious devotion.” After reading the letter several times he launched into an eloquent eulogy of Henri IV, “ who received his baptism at the same font as I, Bernadotte ! ”

As a result of this conversation the exiled “ King ” was encouraged to offer to Bernadotte the high-sounding title of Generalissimo of the armies of France, if he would re-establish the Bourbons. When this offer reached Bernadotte, it came too late to be seriously considered. Sir Edward Thornton believed that he would have accepted it, if it had come with the support of the British Government. In the end he wrote to Condé a

¹ Chaptal, *Souvenirs sur Nap.*, 141.

complimentary letter full of glowing references to "Henri IV and his white plumes."¹

During his stay at Liège an emissary came from his brother-in-law, Joseph Bonaparte. This was a Dr. Franzenberg, the physician of their families, who, in the first instance, informed the Crown Prince that Napoleon wished to know what course he proposed to take. Bernadotte replied :

" You can tell my brother-in-law that I know Napoleon too well not to see a trap in whatever comes from that quarter. I am sure that he either wishes to deceive me or that he deceives himself. My answer to his question is to advise him to make peace as soon as possible. It is on his account more than on mine that I advise him to make peace, although I know very well that I have always been the object of his secret hate, because he has always misjudged me."²

Franzenberg advised the Prince to be the first of the Allies to present himself in Paris, because, if France had to choose between a Bourbon and a French ex-Marshal at the head of an army, he believed the latter would be the choice of the nation. Bernadotte's reply was to the same effect as the answer which he gave at this period to a similar question from Madame Moreau. He was not prepared to take any initiative, or to run as a candidate against any other competitor, but "if fate should enable me to seize an opportunity of usefully serving Europe and the unhappy country of my birth, be assured I shall make every sacrifice."³

Napoleon revenged himself by sending a copy of Franzenberg's report by a despatch-rider, who was sent by a route leading straight to the enemy's camp and was captured with his papers. He hoped by this means to make the Allied Sovereigns suspicious of Bernadotte's good faith.⁴ Luckily for Bernadotte the despatch-rider fell into the hands of the Czar, who fully appreciated

¹ Sarrans, ii. 16-22.

² Id., ii. 362.

³ Id., ii. 137-138.

⁴ Here we are reminded that the main incident of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's story *Brigadier Gerard* was no mere flight of the imagination.

the extraordinary situation of the Crown Prince, and did not attach any gravity to the incident. When it was mentioned in his presence, he observed that he had more to complain of from some of his other Allies.

A few days after the conclusion of this incident, the Prince had occasion to send the Swedish general Skjöldebrand with despatches to the Czar. The general was captured by the French and was conducted to Napoleon, who said to him: "Why has your Crown Prince done me so much harm? But for him I would now be in North Germany." Before the Swedish general could make a reply, the Emperor abruptly asked him whether the Prince was popular in Sweden. "Sire," said Skjöldebrand, "he is adored by the nation and by the army." "I have heard a different story," said the Emperor. "Then you have been deceived, Sire." In dismissing Skjöldebrand Napoleon said three times, "Tell the Crown Prince to remember that he was born a Frenchman."

Skjöldebrand, when making his report of this interview, declared that Napoleon seemed to him far grander on this occasion, in a shabby old chasseur's uniform, alone and in adversity, than when he had been presented to him as Emperor in 1810 in the midst of all the pomp and panoply of his Imperial Court.

Bernadotte was at Liége when the momentous news reached him of Napoleon's abdication and of the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty. He proceeded to Paris by way of Brussels. The object of his visit was not to push his candidature for the throne of France. That dream had been dispelled. He went to Paris in order to meet the Allies and to insist upon the enforcement of his treaty rights.

Before he left Brussels an incident occurred which showed that he did not approve of "hitting the man who was down." Some French prisoners, whom he visited, sought to curry favour, and perhaps to obtain their freedom, by exulting over the approaching fall of Napoleon. Bernadotte gave them no encouragement, and observed coldly that their wants would be attended



Blücher. Bernadotte, The Czar. Emperor of Austria, Wellington.

to pending exchange. Then, turning to General Dulore, who had markedly abstained from joining in the attack on the Emperor, he said: "As for you, General, I give you your liberty. Here is my purse. Return home to France. You can repay me at your leisure."¹

It was noticed that, now that Napoleon was defeated and Sweden was safe, Bernadotte was disposed to defend the fallen Emperor. For example, he condemned the fashionable book of the season, Chateaubriand's *Bonaparte et les Bourbons*, because it "attacked a great man in adversity, and because it falsely denied Napoleon's courage and generalship."²

Immediately after the battle of Leipsic, Bernadotte had occupied the first position among the Allied Chiefs in prestige, and had been widely acclaimed as, *par excellence*, the Emancipator of Europe. Having, in the interval, abstained from taking part in the invasion of France, he had dropped into a secondary place; and the Prussians and Austrians, who had always resented his predominance in the counsels of the Alliance, were now ready to ignore him and to throw him aside.

Russia and England, however, were not forgetful of their engagements. Recognising that he had kept faith with them, they felt bound to support him in completing his acquisition of Norway. Bernadotte had also been promised the island of Guadeloupe which, after much negotiation, he agreed to relinquish in exchange for a handsome solatium.

Bernadotte learned in Paris that the Czar had put forward his name for the throne of France, both at a conference of the Allied Chiefs, and in an interview with the French marshals. It is impossible to say what might have happened if he had taken a vigorous part in the invasion of France and had entered Paris with the prestige of a victorious commander-in-chief. The names of two others were mentioned, the Duke of Orleans and Eugène de Beauharnais; but his was the only one which received serious support from any powerful quarter.

¹ Sarrans, ii. 138-139.

² Pingaud, 309, 310.

In the events that had happened Talleyrand had glided into the position of the principal adviser of the Allies. For a long time he had been covertly in their camp. He posed as the interpreter of French public opinion, and the allied sovereigns followed his advice.

When the question of the succession to the French throne came under discussion, Talleyrand dismissed Bernadotte's candidature with a series of epigrams. "Why choose a soldier," he said, "when you have just discarded the greatest of them all?" "The only possible candidates are Napoleon and Louis XVIII. They represent principles. Any other solution would be a mere intrigue." "Bernadotte would only be another phase of the Revolution."¹

There were some movements in support of Bernadotte among the constitutional liberals; and his old enemy Sieyès expressed himself in favour of "absorbing" him as a "constitutional monarch." There were some demonstrations for him in his native province. But his chance of the French throne took no serious shape; and before he arrived in Paris the restoration of the Bourbons was a *fait accompli*.²

Bernadotte was ill at ease during his brief stay in Paris. At every turn he found himself involved in a clash of conflicting emotions and loyalties. He was a Foreign Prince in the capital of the country of his birth, who was forced to figure as a conqueror of his former compatriots. He refrained from sharing his Allies' triumphal car, or from joining in the loud choir of Royalist exultation. On all sides he found himself exposed to annoyances and placed in incongruous positions.

He occupied the town-house of his brother-in-law, Joseph Bonaparte. Formerly he had been at home there. Now he was an alien with two companies of Cossacks as his guard of honour in the courtyard. He kept in the background, refusing ceremonial invitations and taking

¹ Cf. Pingaud, 301.

² A writer in the *Bulletin Historique* (tome 77, p. 105) said that if Bernadotte had reached the throne of France, he would have led her to glory.

no part in the public rejoicings except at the entry of the Emperor of Austria, from which he could not decently absent himself. When the Allied Sovereigns attended the opera in State he sat aloof in a private box. He shrank from meeting old political friends like Lafayette who might have reproached him with having contributed *malgré lui* to the restoration of the Bourbons.

He met and conversed with four marshals of Napoleon who had been notable pillars of the fallen Empire. These were Ney, Prince of the Moskowa, Augereau, Duke of Castiglione, Marmont, Duke of Ragusa, and Lefèbvre, Duke of Dantzic. When they referred to his royal rank, he put his old comrades on the same level with himself: "Men like us," he said, "who know how to win battles, are already the equals of kings." These old comrades of his were not disposed to judge him very harshly. They were well aware how tyrannically Napoleon had behaved towards Sweden; and they were ready to make excuses for the Crown Prince of that country. They understood his point of view and bore him no malice.

Not so, however, the Duchess of Dantzic, that *ci-devant blanchisseuse*, who survives as a heroine of musical comedy. A story was current in Paris, that upon the occasion of a visit to Marshal Lefèbvre, the Crown Prince expressed his regret that "la bonne Maréchale" was not at home. A door opened, and from the next room Bernadotte heard the unmistakable voice of "Madame Sans-Gêne" exclaiming, "I am at home, traitor, but I don't want to see you."

Madame Junot, Duchess of Abrantès, tells us that some of the Prince's officers commandeered her apartments as their billet. She wrote an indignant letter to the Prince, who through his aide-de-camp, the charming Count Brahé, sent apologies and made amends.

More forgiving than Madame "Sans-Gêne" or than Madame Junot was the Queen Hortense,¹ Napoleon's step-daughter, who did not forget how Napoleon had treated her mother, the Empress Josephine:

¹ Ex-Queen of Holland.

“ I saw Bernadotte, the Swedish Crown Prince,” she wrote in her diary, “ a former Republican ; he was brave, with a charming gracious politeness and full of military talents. He, too, wished to explain his conduct, and it is always awkward when conduct requires explanation. He assured me that the Emperor’s injustice towards him and towards Sweden were the only reasons for his taking up arms, and that these arms had not struck a single blow since he set foot on his native soil.” ¹

Having paid a courtesy visit to King Louis XVIII, whom he advised to govern France “ with an iron hand in a velvet glove,” he ended what must have been a fever-laden fortnight, and on the 1st of May, bade farewell to France for ever. Désirée remained behind to comfort her sister, who had become an exile and a fugitive and was in poor health.

¹ *Memoirs of Queen Hortense*, edited by Prince Napoleon (Eng. Tr.), ii. 86, 87.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE UNION WITH NORWAY—THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA —THE HUNDRED DAYS

JUNE 1814—DECEMBER 1817

BERNADOTTE now rejoined his army at Brussels and conducted it back to Sweden, where, wrote the English Minister in Stockholm, he “was received with every mark of enthusiasm.” He was met by a formidable emergency in Norway, which, by the Treaty of Kiel, had been ceded by the King of Denmark to the King of Sweden.

The Treaty of Kiel had settled the question, so far as the King of Denmark was concerned. But the Norwegians denied the King’s right to dispose of Norway without their consent. Accordingly a Convention was held at Eidsvold, near Christiania, at which Norway was declared an independent Kingdom; a liberal and democratic Constitution was adopted; and Prince Christian Frederick of Denmark was elected King. Thenceforward the anniversary of these events, the 17th May, became memorable in Norwegian history as the “Day of Independence.”

King Christian Frederick lost no time in sending an agent to London, who met with a chilling reception; and the Norwegians were notified by all the Allied Governments that it was their unanimous intention that Norway should be united to Sweden. Christian Frederick at once called the Norwegian nation to arms, and soon found himself at the head of an army of 50,000 men.

The Crown Prince had no intention of allowing the fruit of all his diplomacy and of all his sacrifices to be plucked from his grasp at the last moment. A week hardly passed after his return to Stockholm before he

took the field. In a proclamation to his army he dilated upon his favourite text—namely, the advantages which accrue to a nation from the enjoyment of an isolated position protected by natural frontiers. “Look at England,” he declared. “The prosperity of that celebrated island is based upon a union similar to ours.”

The Crown Prince made short work of the Norwegian resistance. Crossing the frontier, he obtained control of the border fortresses, and had King Christian Frederick’s army at his mercy. But being anxious that the nascent union of two nations should not be baptized with blood, he proceeded to conciliate popular feeling by releasing his prisoners, and by proclaiming that he was not fighting against the Norwegians, but against the Danes who were exploiting them. He then sent negotiators to the Norwegian Headquarters, offering Norway a larger degree of independence than she had ever enjoyed under Denmark.

Within a fortnight of the opening of the campaign, hostilities were suspended; and, at a meeting of the Norwegian Storthing, which was held seven weeks afterwards, Norway was declared to be a separate Kingdom. The Constitution of Eidsvold was retained. The only change which was made in that Constitution was the transfer of the Crown to the Swedish dynasty.

Prince Christian, in obedience to the decision of the Storthing, renounced his rights as King of Norway, and sailed for Denmark a few days afterwards, while the Storthing unanimously elected King Charles XIII to be King of Norway, and recognised Bernadotte and his descendants as heirs to the Norwegian throne. In a confirmatory Act it was recited that “the union between the two peoples had been accomplished, not by force of arms, but by a free convention.”

The Crown Prince had good reason to congratulate himself upon the success of his solution of the problem. His title as heir to the Norwegian throne rested upon the solid foundation of election by the Norwegian Storthing. He had gone, he had seen, and he had conquered. Yet he had spilled no blood; he had made no enemies; and,



KING CHARLES XIII, BERNADOTTE'S ADOPTIVE FATHER.

After the portrait by Prafft.

after King Christian Frederick's abdication, he had no rival in the field.

This bloodless campaign was the last of Bernadotte's military adventures. Having united Norway and Sweden, he turned his sword into a ploughshare and gave up all idea of conquest or of territorial aggrandisement. When diplomatic difficulties arose with Denmark or Prussia, he sometimes gasconaded about dating his decrees from Copenhagen: "Yes, gentlemen, from Copenhagen"; or conquering Prussia: "Yes, gentlemen, in three or four months." But it is not uncommon for an old war-horse occasionally to snort and paw the ground in his comfortable paddock. Save that the phantom of the French throne continued to linger fitfully among his day-dreams, Bernadotte's aspirations were satisfied and his ambitious nature was at rest.

As the Swedes had expected that Norway would be incorporated as a province of Sweden, the Norwegian settlement failed to reach the height of their expectations. But its shortcomings did not mar the real esteem and popularity which the Crown Prince had gained by reaping for his future subjects a rich harvest of peace and glory at a trifling cost of blood and treasure. He had done more than laurel Sweden with victories. He had procured a million for Guadeloupe, half a million from Prussia for Swedish Pomerania, a loan from Russia and a subsidy from England. Some of these moneys were allowed to go into his pocket as a matter of international stipulation, or as a recompense for personal sacrifices; but a substantial amount had been applied in indemnifying Sweden from the expenses of war and in the reduction of the Swedish national debt.

The Crown Prince was in the habit of giving the credit for all his achievements to the King, to the people, and to the army. But nobody could have taken these modest pretences seriously. Everyone knew, and he knew that everyone knew, that he had been the real leader of the nation, and that these happy results were the fruits of his generalship and of his diplomatic skill.

It was obvious that it was he who had moulded Sweden's foreign policy, directed her diplomacy, commanded her armies, and won for her both victory and peace. He naturally became the object of an outburst of enthusiasm. The national poets voiced the popular sentiments. One of the most distinguished of them, Professor Geijer of Upsala University, broke down from emotion when reciting in public his description of the Crown Prince as "a hero capable of winning hearts as well as battles, the Prince of Peace, the friend of Liberty."

Nowhere was the Prince more beloved than in the bosom of the royal family.

"Swedes," it has been well said, "were grateful and appreciative when they saw this French warrior, this ex-general of the epoch of the Republic, this ex-marshal of the epoch of Napoleon, lavishing upon their aged and infirm King the most tender and delicate attentions, adapting all his habits to suit those of his adopted father, and winning the affection not only of both the Vasa Queens, but even of the Princess Sophie Albertine, great-aunt of Gustavus IV."¹

Rumours of a poison plot against the lives of the Crown Prince and of his son were widely advertised in Europe. Their effect in Sweden was to evoke addresses of loyalty and affection from the four Houses of the Diet, as well as from the army and from the citizens.

To the military deputation he responded with an invitation that they should never hesitate to come forward as his mentors in the path of duty :

"You know," he said to them, "that I act, and that I always wish to act, in harmony with the law. But, if forgetful of what I owe you and of my character and principles, I were ever to allow myself to be so intoxicated by the cup of power as to assail your liberties, I ask you not to hesitate to recall me to the path of duty. It is the duty of brave men to speak with frankness and loyalty.

¹ Sarrans, ii. 172.

My heart will always be ready to listen to you, but, if I should be so blind to my glory and to my interests as to refuse to listen to you, I am willing that you should turn against me the arms which you now offer for my defence."

To the deputation from the citizens of Stockholm he vindicated his legitimacy resting upon the election by the nation and upon adoption by the King :

" If I could trace my ancestry to the time of Charles Martel, I should value it solely for your sakes. For myself, I am satisfied with the services which I have rendered, and with the glory to which I owe my elevation. These claims of mine were confirmed and ratified by the adoption of the King and by the unanimous choice of a free people. Here lie the foundations of my rights, and, until honour and justice are banished from the world, they will be more legitimate, and more sacred, than if I were descended from Odin." ¹

In these florid passages we recognise our old friend, the Gascon sergeant of the days of the French Revolution.

At the end of one of the Regencies which fell upon Bernadotte owing to King Charles XIII's declining health, the King issued a proclamation declaring that his " dear son's assiduity and zeal had rendered imperishable the ties which bound them to each other." On another occasion the King expressed the confident hope " that Sweden may find the valour of *her* sons animated by the glorious example of *my* son." ² Many other affectionate references by the old King to his adopted son might be cited which are to the same effect.

When Prince Oscar came of age, the old King made a touching speech which concluded as follows :

" Do not forget, dear grand-child, that I impose upon you to-day a sacred duty, namely to repay, when I am gone, the debt which I owe your father for the kind attentions and for the untiring tenderness which he has lavished on me from the day he united his lot with that

¹ Sarrans, ii. 193-195.

² F.O., 73/75.

of this country. Always be to him what he has been to me. Be his support, as he has been mine. Render to him all the care, and all the consolation which he has given to my old age.”¹

Bernadotte, from the moment of his return to Sweden in 1814, had been exposed to repeated annoyances from foreign intrigues in favour of Prince Gustavus Vasa, son of the deposed King. England had given no countenance to these intrigues ; and the Czar, although Prince Gustavus was his nephew, lost no opportunity of proclaiming that—

“ he would never cease to regard the Crown Prince with esteem and friendship, that Europe in a large degree owed to him her liberties, and that the rank which he had attained was due to his personal merits, and to the choice of Sweden which had been justified in the face of the world.”

This incident elicited from Bernadotte a letter of thanks to the Czar declaring himself—

“ fortunate in being able to add to my title-deeds Your Majesty’s friendship and the honour of having retrieved the glory of Sweden. With muniments of title such as these, my rights are more sure and more legitimate than if I were the lineal descendant of a usurper of the time of Charles Martel.”

“ The lineal descendant of a usurper of the time of Charles Martel ” was the French King Louis XVIII, who supported Gustavus, and urged upon Talleyrand, his plenipotentiary at the Congress of Vienna, the desirability of displacing Bernadotte from the giddy heights to which he had ascended. Talleyrand had replied that Bernadotte’s title to the succession of the Swedish throne, resting as it did upon constitutional election and adoption, was as legitimate as that of Louis XVIII himself. Talleyrand pointed out that to attack Bernadotte’s right of succession was to attack Charles XIII’s throne, because both rested on the same basis of election.

¹ Sarrans, ii. 201.

The Bourbon King, having been forced to recognise that, from a constitutional point of view, Bernadotte's new dynasty was firmly grafted upon the old stock of the Vasas, had to satisfy himself with backstairs intrigues, and with a campaign in his official newspapers, in one of which the Crown Prince was represented as meditating a divorce from Désirée and an alliance with a Russian or Prussian Princess or with a daughter of the Swedish family of Fersen.

Louis XVIII's plottings for the expulsion of the Swedish Crown Prince from his adopted country were suddenly interrupted by the amazing event which so rudely expelled Louis from his own. Before the end of March 1815 every country in Europe was startled by the intelligence that Napoleon had escaped from Elba.

The news of Napoleon's desperate enterprise stirred up in the Crown Prince's mind a tumult of clashing hopes, fears and sympathies. He had been mollified by receiving information from Elba that Napoleon had spoken of him in terms that were forgiving and indulgent. To Frenchmen he had always declared that he would never have fought against Napoleon in 1813, if Napoleon had not forced him to do so. There was now a conflict in his mind between his personal feelings and the State policy of Sweden ; but he knew how to keep them apart. His personal feelings wavered from week to week.

When Napoleon landed in the Gulf of Juan with his handful of companions, Bernadotte prophesied that certain failure must be the fate of such a forlorn hope. He was thrilled by "the flight of the imperial eagle from tower to tower until it lit on Notre Dame." When Napoleon reached Paris without firing a shot, occupied the Tuileries, and succeeded in re-establishing his imperial authority for a hundred days, the ex-marshal was carried away by the wonder of the achievement. It reminded him of the glorious campaigns of the Empire and of the brilliant part which he had himself taken in them at Austerlitz, Halle, Lübeck, Mohrungen and Spanden. There were moments when he half regretted that it was

impossible for him to offer his sword to Napoleon ; and he was heard to say that the Emperor of the French was " the greatest captain in the world's history, superior to Hannibal, Cæsar or Moses." ¹ After the battle of Waterloo and the banishment of Napoleon to St. Helena, the broken idol fell from its pedestal at Stockholm as elsewhere.

In spite of the emotions which the Hundred Days aroused in Bernadotte, he navigated the ship of Sweden throughout that crisis with his accustomed coolness and caution, steering her by her star which shone in the same constellation as his own. His former Allies looked to him for a renewal of his co-operation against Napoleon. But he claimed to have fully discharged all his obligations as one of the Allies in the War of Liberation. He declared that a new situation had arisen in which he insisted upon preserving a strict neutrality. So far as was possible without a breach of neutrality, he favoured the imperial regime, and threw the official Press of Sweden into the balance on Napoleon's side. This was due partly to a reaction in his feelings towards Napoleon, and partly to the circumstance that several of his former associates, such as Lafayette, Benjamin Constant and Carnot, had identified themselves with Napoleon's Government and had accepted important posts during its brief existence.

When the Hundred Days ended, he was heard to speak in favour of a Republic, or of Napoleon's son, or of a Constitutional monarchy under the Duke of Orleans. The British Minister at Stockholm observed that the idea of making the Duke of Orleans King of France had " taken possession of the Prince's mind." Thus he was anticipating, by fifteen years, the revolution which set Louis Philippe on the throne.

The second Restoration of the Bourbons was a disappointment to him, and he acquiesced in it without enthusiasm. He did not conceal his disapproval of the Royalist reaction in France and of its attendant persecutions. He was so shocked at the trial and execution of

¹ Cf. Pingaud, 325.

his old friend, Marshal Ney, that he invited Ney's son, who succeeded his father as Prince of the Moskowa, to Stockholm, gave him a commission in the Swedish Army, and appointed him aide-de-camp to Prince Oscar.

He also gave a commission in his army to the son of another former comrade-in-arms, General Drouet,¹ who fled from France after the second Restoration; and he appointed the son of Fouché, Duke of Otranto, to be a Chamberlain at his Court. He did not break his personal ties with the Bonapartes. With the help of the English Prince Regent he obtained leave for Madame Joseph Bonaparte to reside near Frankfort, where she was joined by Désirée. When Lucien Bonaparte's daughter married a Swedish diplomat Lucien is found writing:

"Although some of my family object to the marriage because of their antipathy to Bernadotte, that does not affect me. Bernadotte has always been my friend in every sense of the term, and I am glad that my daughter should be at his Court."

The Royalist party in France revenged itself by instituting a press campaign against the Swedish Prince, and by encouraging the dynastic claims of the young Gustavus Vasa, to whom Victor Hugo is found dedicating an ode. Louis XVIII instructed his Ministers at Stockholm to take notice of the weaknesses of the "*parvenu*" Prince, and they did so by exaggerating and caricaturing his Gascon foibles. The following passages from one of their despatches are typical of them all:

"The Crown Prince presents two very different sides. . . . On the one hand, one recognises in him a man of elevated genius, ardent, active, enterprising; and, above all, a captain with the gift of audacity and success. It is not uncommon for heroes who shine in the field to appear weak and mediocre at other times and in relation to other objects. . . . He is agitated by the weaknesses of a restless, irritable, irresolute spirit. . . . He is an ambitious personage, raised by events beyond the bounds of the wildest imagination, who is not satisfied

¹ See p. 203, *ante*.

with his lot. . . . His political principles have no settled lines. In the same breath he speaks like an absolute despot, and like a Republican demagogue. . . . This medley is the result of the studies and impressions of his youth, which took such deep root as to be difficult to destroy. . . . His greatest talent is to impose upon others by the effect of his elocution. . . . It is true that he has the gift of eloquence, vehement, impetuous, passionate, which seduces and carries away his hearers, not by its force or reason, but by its energy and volubility. He has also the great accomplishment of knowing how to charm by his affable and ingratiating manners. . . .”¹

In spite of his dislike of the Bourbons, the Crown Prince refused to countenance any of the Bonapartist or Republican plots for their overthrow.² One of these conspiracies aimed at placing the Prince of Orange, who was a brother-in-law of the Czar, on the throne of France. Bernadotte refused to receive the agent whom they sent to Stockholm, and the plot fizzled out from want of encouragement.

Meanwhile young Gustavus Vasa's German relatives requested his uncle, the Czar, to have him brought up at the Russian Court. Bernadotte offered no objection, but severely reproved the Swedish Minister at St. Petersburg for having demanded young Gustavus's renunciation of his rights to the succession to the Swedish throne. Bernadotte pointed out, in a despatch to the Minister, that such a proceeding was ridiculous, because the Prince had no rights. In defence of his own dynasty he proclaimed himself ready to lay down his life, declaring that “the man who had dared to face Napoleon on the battlefield had no fear of anyone else.” He directed his Minister to request an audience of the Czar and to read him his despatch. The Czar gave no encouragement to the hope of the young Pretender, and the episode turned out to be the last gasp of the Vasas.

¹ Quoted from the French archives by Pingaud, 439.

² *Ib.*, 333 et seq.



JEAN BAPTISTE BERNADOTTE, CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN.

Born 1763, enlisted 1780; Sergeant-Major 1788; Lieutenant 1792; General of Division 1794; Ambassador 1798; Minister of War 1799; Marshal 1804; Prince of Ponte Corvo 1805; Crown Prince of Sweden 1810; King of Sweden and Norway 1818; died 1844.

PART VI
*KING OF SWEDEN AND NORWAY*¹

1818-1844

¹ This period has been treated in greater detail in *Bernadotte, Prince and King* (John Murray, London), chapters xxv-xxxv, pp. 155-232. The author acknowledges his indebtedness to M. Christian Schefer's *Bernadotte Roi* (Paris, 1899).

CHAPTER XXXVIII

ACCESSION AND CORONATION

1818

THE Diet was assembled at Stockholm in the early weeks of 1818. On the evening of 1st February upwards of a hundred deputies, representing every province of Sweden and every class of Swedes, were being entertained at a parliamentary dinner at the Royal Palace. The Crown Prince was acting as host, in the absence of Charles XIII, who was indisposed. As the guests rose from table a message came summoning the Prince to the bedside of the King. His indisposition had suddenly taken a serious turn.

It was observed that, while the King lingered for several days, the Crown Prince was the prey to a feverish excitement which was reflected in his manner and his conversation. This restless disquietude may have been mainly due to his nervous anticipation of the impending change in his own position ; but there was no trace of affectation in his dutiful attentions to the dying King and in his expression of affection and sympathy towards the Queen in her bereavement. Towards his end the old King constantly desired the presence of the Crown Prince, and one of his last utterances to those about him was, " I die tranquilly because I know to whom I am leaving my kingdoms and my subjects who have always been my children."

The Crown Prince's attentive and affectionate attitude towards his adoptive parents was quite sincere, and came naturally to a man of his dutiful character and chivalrous disposition. Now that this act in the drama of his career was closed, his severest critics were compelled to admit that, down to the fall of the curtain, this

ex-marshal of France had worthily played the part of King Charles XIII's adopted son.

Upon the death of Charles XIII, Bernadotte became *ipso facto* and *instantly* King of Sweden and of Norway. This was the effect of the various constitutional acts by which his original election as Crown Prince had been confirmed and accepted in both kingdoms. From the death chamber he walked to the oratory, where he signed a solemn affirmation of fidelity to the Constitution, describing himself under his new style and name: "We, Charles John, by the grace of God, King of Sweden, of Norway, of the Goths and of the Vandals."

On the 7th February the King's solemn affirmation was read by the Grand Marshal in the presence of a host of councillors and of other officers of the State, as well as of nobles, judges, deputies, chiefs of the military and naval services, statesmen and courtiers. The Foreign Minister then administered to Prince Oscar as Crown Prince the Oath of Allegiance; after which the assembled company, following the form in use under the Vasas, swore to be always faithful to "their legitimate King, the high and mighty Prince and Lord, Charles XIV John." The British Minister reported to our Foreign Office that "the utmost demonstrations of popular satisfaction were visible." The English and French journals reported enthusiastic manifestations of loyalty at Upsala, Carlskrona and other provincial centres.

In his reply to an address which was presented by a deputation from the Swedish Diet, the King once more struck the key-note of his state policy:

"Separated as we are from the rest of Europe, our policy and our interests will always lead us to refrain from involving ourselves in any dispute which does not concern the two Scandinavian peoples. At the same time, in obedience to the dictates both of our national duty and of our national honour, we shall not permit any other power to intervene in our internal affairs."

In Norway the ceremonies attending the King's accession were simpler than in Sweden. The Viceroy attended

the Storthing, and the deputies, rising in their places, declared: "We promise and swear, upon our souls and consciences, to be obedient to the Constitution and to the King Charles John." The President said, addressing the Viceroy: "The oath has been taken; and we implore the benediction of heaven upon the King and his kingdom."

On the 11th May, at Stockholm, Bernadotte was crowned by the Archbishop of Upsala with all the traditional ceremonies that had for centuries accompanied the coronation of kings of Sweden. Afterwards, in accordance with custom, he received the homage of an enthusiastic crowd of citizens at the palace gates opposite the equestrian statue of Gustavus Adolphus, who, a little more than two hundred years back, had opened an eventful reign near the same spot.

On 7th September the cathedral of St. Olaf at Trondhjem was the scene of his coronation as King of Norway. No such event had occurred in that city of the Far North for more than three centuries. With crown and sceptre, with a royal train borne by three chamberlains, under a canopy carried by eight dignitaries of State, surrounded by grand officers of the kingdom, ermined judges, pursuivants in coats of mail, and gold-braided generals, ex-sergeant Bernadotte walked majestically to his throne, while a genuine outburst of popular acclaim greeted the herald's proclamation that "Charles John has been crowned King of Norway and its dependencies—he and no other." He did not visit Trondhjem again until seventeen years afterwards when he opened a road connecting that place with Sweden, which was one of the many great public works of which he was an active initiator.

Almost the only discordant note that was struck in connection with the Norwegian coronation was a demonstration of peasants in the neighbourhood of Christiania with the professed object of making Bernadotte an absolute monarch. Whether this movement was a spontaneous uprising by the peasants against the bourgeois legislature, or, as some suspicious writers have

suggested, was inspired from aloft, is an unsettled question. At all events, the King suppressed what threatened to take the form of a revolt against the constituted authorities, caused the ring-leaders to be arrested, and took the opportunity of emphasising his loyal adherence to the Norwegian Constitution. The Vasas never had any serious support in Norway. On the King's first journey through Norway a common form of welcome was a device inscribed "Him and no other—His dynasty and no other's."

Although some ingredients of bitterness were mixed in the cup of Bernadotte's success, he was able to derive unalloyed gratification from the circumstance that his accession to both his thrones was received with hardly a murmur of dissent. It was made evident that the "Gustavian," or "Legitimist," party was dead. One of the incidents of the occasion was so strange as almost to pass belief. The dethroned king, Gustavus IV, wrote a personal letter of congratulation to his fortunate supplanter, and permitted Count Bonde, who as a typical "Gustavian" had hitherto held aloof from the new Court, to assert a right, which was hereditary in his family, to bear the train of Bernadotte's mantle at his coronation.

What a complete and astonishing success for the friendless recruit of forty years back, the sergeant of infantry of thirty years back, the revolutionary general of twenty years back, the marshal "out of favour" of ten years back. His had been the achievement of one—

" Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star."

His enemies did not conceal their chagrin. They deplored what they called the "surprising bad taste" of his Scandinavian subjects, and endeavoured to explain away the merit of his achievement. But the completeness of his personal triumph was indisputable. For several years, as Crown Prince, he had been the virtual ruler of both kingdoms; and it was now made evident that he

had won general esteem and approbation. In doing so he was only repeating his successes as Governor of Friuli, of Hanover, of Anspach and of the Hanseatic towns.¹ In these employments Bernadotte had proved himself to be a judicious administrator and a beneficent ruler. General Zurlinden, who wrote the lives of the Marshals of Napoleon, gave Bernadotte credit for possessing, to a rare degree, the qualities of "moderation, justice and skill."

Among his Scandinavian subjects his task was easier than when he had governed conquered territory. He was not imposed upon them as a satrap but was the deliberate choice of both nations. Undoubtedly the main-spring of his success was the whole-heartedness with which he identified himself with his adopted countries, and united their fortunes and destinies with his own.

The death of the King was followed in a few weeks by that of his widowed Queen; and one of Bernadotte's first duties as King was to be the central figure at the funeral of his adoptive mother. This event affected Bernadotte so acutely that it was noticed by the British agents in Stockholm.² She had been a bond of union between him and the Court; and her attachment to him had been a support to him on many occasions. He was now left alone without any link with the Royal Family into which he had been adopted. He began to be more anxious about the marriage of his son and about the placing of his House and dynasty upon a secure basis.

¹ See pp. 68, 169, 180, 211, *ante*.

² F.O., 73/104.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE KING AND QUEEN AT HOME

1818-1844

FOR five years after Bernadotte's accession, his Court was left without a queen. Désirée remained in Paris with her sister the Ex-Queen of Spain, whose husband was now an exile in the United States. She preferred the twilight of a private circle to the glare of royal state and ceremony. When she had become Crown Princess of Sweden she had been in despair at the idea of leaving her friends and relatives in Paris. Her sister, Julie, had gone through similar experiences, had wept when she learned that she had become Queen of Naples, and had resolutely refused to go to Madrid when her husband had been transferred to the throne of Spain.

Désirée's short visit to Sweden in January 1811 has been mentioned before.¹ During that visit the Crown Princess had surprised Swedish society by her unconventional ways, of which the following anecdote affords an example. A lady of high rank, in presenting her daughters, remarked, "Your Royal Highness knows that they are the daughters of a count of the Holy Roman Empire." "Yes, madam," replied the Princess, "and I also know that I am the daughter of a merchant of Marseilles."²

After her return to Paris, where she lived under the incognito of "Princess of Gothland," she exposed herself to comment and misunderstanding by haunting the Foreign Minister, the Duc de Richelieu, who is said to have referred to her as "a little Swedish police agent whom

¹ See p. 262, *ante*.

² Sarah, Lady Lyttelton, 54.



DÉSIRÉE CLARY.

Married to Bernadotte 1798.

Maréchale 1804.

Princess of Ponte Corvo 1806.

Princess Royal of Sweden 1810.

Queen of Sweden and Norway 1818.

her august husband has put upon my track." However, when her correspondence was censored, it was discovered that she was chiefly interested in interceding on behalf of her sister, and in amusing her husband with the social and political gossip which she picked up at the British Embassy, in the *salons* of Madame Récamier, and from Madame de Genlis, Madame Moreau and her other friends. Louis XVIII treated her with distinction, sent to congratulate her when she became a Queen, and received her at private audiences.

For a dozen years after her first visit to Sweden, Désirée remained in France, dividing her time between her sister's place of exile, her own town house in the Rue d'Anjou and her country house at Auteuil, acting as her husband's newsgatherer, and welcoming Swedish visitors who came to France. She was fond of music, but always spoke modestly of her own musical talent. The news of her husband's accession found her playing the piano. "Now," she remarked, "they will be able to say truthfully that I play like a queen."

Her own accession as Queen did not in the least disturb the even tenor of her life. It was the betrothal of her son Prince Oscar to the Princess Josephine, daughter of Eugène de Beauharnais, and granddaughter of the King of Bavaria, that called her back to Sweden in 1823. Then she sailed into the beautiful harbour of Stockholm over a tranquil sea and under a sunny sky, and she saw her husband's realm under more agreeable conditions than on the occasion of her former visit.

In a letter to Princess Pauline Bonaparte she described her son as the image of what his father had been at twenty-three. Was she thinking of the first time she had seen him when he had been turned away from her father's house because he was a sergeant and not an officer? ¹

Thenceforward Désirée remained in Sweden. When she was crowned as Queen, she adopted the name of Desideria, in order to gratify the Swedes by taking a Latin rather than a French nomenclature. After her

¹ See pp. 10, 11, *ante*.

coronation she was constantly on the point of revisiting France, but never did so. Napoleon III proposed to receive her in Paris as "a daughter of France." She actually embarked to make the journey, but changed her mind while she was still in Swedish waters, and never afterwards left her adopted country.

She never interfered in public affairs except as the echo or mouthpiece of her husband, of whom she was thinking when she made the following entry in the album of a French Minister: "The universe is the country of brave men: Agrippa was adopted by Augustus. A man enters the family of Kings by his goodness, and retains the position by the nobility of his actions."

Désirée had her admirers and Bernadotte his feminine friendships and ideals. But they were genuinely attached to each other, and Bernadotte played the part of her lover to the end. For him she was his "Bonnette," a spoiled child, whom he petted and guided. She derived amusement from his gasconades, and was the only person who was privileged to make fun of them. At the time of an *émeute* in Stockholm in 1838, the King exclaimed in the presence of his household, "I will decimate them all. Torrents of blood shall flow." To which Désirée replied: "You decimate them all! Torrents of blood! Why, you would not hurt a chicken! You would not kill a kitten!" This bantering remark was so characteristic of both of them that it passed into history.

The state formalities which they maintained in Sweden were correct and dignified, but not imposing. In Norway they were severely simple. They reserved ceremony for ceremonial occasions only. The King had very few fads or caprices. He had no taste for the chase, the theatre or the card-table. His building activity never carried him beyond the erection of a country house at Rosendal, which was more like a summer villa than a palace. He found his principal occupation and amusement in the work of government, and in a sustained effort to strengthen the foundations of his dynasty. He attended assiduously to the duties of his position, visiting

provinces, initiating public works, holding reviews, and paying respectful attention to the observance of the state religion.

Among his descendants have been painters, musicians, poets and antiquarians. He followed these pursuits, but he did not personally dabble in them. He supported science and education both by his active patronage, and by liberal benefactions. We catch a glimpse of his encouragement of art and music when we find Jenny Lind, whom he appointed Court Singer towards the end of his reign, speaking of him as "my King and my benefactor."¹

The King used to "let himself go" with great frankness in his familiar talks with the foreign ministers who were attached to his Court. His conversation was always sprinkled with Gascon phrases such as "*Entendez-vous?*" or "*Dieu vivant!*" His listeners were interested by his reminiscences of a career which had run its course through so many incongruous situations and among such divers environments. They found him full of antitheses, "a liberal in opinion and a conservative in practice," "fond of talking, yet a man of action and even of fine actions."

The embers of the fire of the French Revolution occasionally broke out in his conversation. He was in the habit of describing himself as "a Republican upon a throne," and of speaking so sympathetically about "liberty" and "public opinion" and "the spirit of the age," that his auditors sometimes were puzzled to determine whether he remained at heart a Republican or a Monarchist. Yet he always claimed complete consistency of character and conduct. He had revolted against class privilege, not against social order or constitutional government.

Bernadotte loved praise, and his enemies charged him with procuring it by favouring historians and biographers, and even by means of propaganda through his ministers and agents.² But the charge was grossly exaggerated. Lord Londonderry and Sir Walter Scott were

¹ So her son informed the author.

² Pingaud, 376.

included in the lists of his supposed "publicity agents" by writers whose books were steeped in venom. They could not forgive him for having helped to defeat Napoleon; and they were disposed to regard anybody who praised him as his "publicity agent."

The atmosphere which some of the Napoleonic memoir-writers have created round the career and character of Bernadotte is of such a poisonous kind that the student of the period needs a mental gas-mask to resist its fumes. Much excuse should be made for brave men who were embittered by the contrast between his success and their own downfall. Their minds became so jaundiced that they continued to denounce him as a "traitor" after the imputation had been withdrawn by Napoleon at St. Helena and had been officially repudiated by Thiers in the French Chamber of Deputies.¹

The King was a hard worker in an indolent fashion of his own. It had been his habit in his campaigns to throw himself on his camp-bed and to dictate his orders to his staff officers, using his knees for a desk; and, as a King, he frequently worked in this posture.²

When at work in his private apartments, he was sometimes disturbed by the entry of the Queen, or of Prince Oscar, or, as they grew up, of Prince Oscar's children. On the occasion of these incursions, work was usually suspended; and in this way his ministers and councillors became the witnesses of an intimate home life which was as simple and patriarchal as that of any Swedish bourgeois. This familiarity did not breed contempt. With a few exceptions, his ministers and councillors became deeply attached to the King. It was said of him that he belied the truth of the common saying that no man is a hero to his valet.

As he grew older his thoughts more than ever recurred to his varied experiences in the French army. He took pleasure in recalling celebrated scenes in which he had

¹ *Discours Parlementaires*, 1-98 (20th September, 1831), cited Pingaud, 412.

² Schefer, 171.

participated, such as the military mutinies of the Revolutionary Army, the battle of Teining, the Coronation of Napoleon and the distribution of the Eagles. He used to point with pride to the arms of honour which had been presented to him by the French Directory in 1797¹; and many an anecdote was introduced with the words: "*Lorsque j'étais sergent,*" or "*à cette époque je venais d'être nommé officier.*"

Towards foreign Sovereigns the King maintained a correct attitude so long as he was dealt with upon terms of perfect equality; and he is found from time to time preventing or suppressing the publication in his Kingdoms of offensive references to foreign Governments. But, if he saw any tendency to treat him *en parvenu*, he was disposed to fire up in true Gascon fashion.

Once he said to the English Minister, Lord Stratford, when he felt that he had been unduly pressed upon a matter affecting Swedish independence, that he "was ready to sacrifice his crown and his life sooner than dishonour himself by receiving the law from Sovereigns with whose qualities and character he was in the habit of comparing his own, without ever finding anything disadvantageous to himself in the parallel."² On another occasion he is found making a similar remark with reference to the attitude of the Emperor of Russia, with the result that amends were quickly made.

There was a method in this kind of gasconading. He asserted himself *pour se faire valoir*. He resented advice from any foreign quarter in reference to the internal government of his Kingdom. Once we find him offering advice to the King of Spain. In doing so he showed something of the same spirit as he had displayed in his early letters to his brother when he was a young lieutenant. He counselled the King of Spain to "disregard foreign advice and to consult his own heart and conscience which can never play him false."³

The House of Bernadotte, since the time of King Charles XIV and Queen Desideria, has taken a place of perfect

¹ See p. 59, *ante*.

² F.O., 73/109.

³ See p. 15, *ante*.

equality with the other European dynasties, and has become united by marriage alliances with the ancient House of Vasa and with the Royal House of England. Their descendants have rooted themselves firmly not only in the affection of their subjects but also in the respect of foreign nations. Among the inherited qualities which have made this achievement possible have been the indefatigable sense of public duty which was displayed by the founder of their House, and the entire absence of pretension or affectation which was characteristic of Queen Desideria.¹

¹ The late Mr. Henry Labouchere, M.P., told the author that, when he was attached to the British Legation in Sweden, he was frequently sent for by Queen Desideria. He was struck by her charm and simplicity of manner. She doubtless enjoyed the young diplomat's witty conversation.

CHAPTER XL

THE PRISONER OF ST. HELENA

1815-1821

WHILE Bernadotte reigned in Sweden and Norway, Napoleon was eating his heart out at St. Helena. The contrast between their relative destinies was too glaring to escape each other's notice.

The Ex-Emperor on several occasions denounced his ex-marshal's abandonment of the cause of the Empire and prophesied his fall. For example, in a conversation with Las Cases, he bitterly reproached Bernadotte with not having come to his assistance during the Russian campaign. In doing so he utterly ignored his own invasion of Swedish territory, and the mad folly of the Russian enterprise in which he had urged Bernadotte to involve his adopted country.

“ A Frenchman,” he exclaimed, “ had in his hands the destinies of the world, if he had possessed the judgment and the soul to rise to the height of the situation. If he had been a good Swede, as he pretended to be, he could have restored the lustre and power of his new country by seizing Finland, and by descending upon St. Petersburg before I had reached Moscow. But he yielded to personal resentments, to a foolish vanity, and to every kind of petty passion. His head was turned, when he found himself, old Jacobin as he was, sought after and flattered by legitimate Sovereigns, and in political alliance and friendship with the Emperor of all the Russias, who spared no cajolery to gain him. It was said that it was even insinuated that he might have aspired to one of the Emperor's sisters, on divorcing his wife ; while from another quarter a French Prince wrote to him that he

was glad to remember that Béarn was the cradle of both their houses. Bernadotte's house ! . . . In his intoxication Bernadotte sacrificed both the country of his birth and the country of his adoption, as well as his own glory, his true interests, the cause of his people, and the destiny of the world. It was a blunder for which he paid dearly. No sooner had he succeeded in what was expected of him than he began to feel the consequences. It is said that he has repented ; but he has not yet expiated his offence. He remains the only parvenu on a throne. The scandal cannot remain long unpunished. It would be too dangerous an example." ¹

Napoleon, pining away in his island prison, may be excused for distorting history and for misreading the book of Fate. The suggestion that Bernadotte's refusal to enter upon a campaign for the reconquest of Finland was inspired by " personal resentments," " foolish vanity " and " petty passions " was demonstrably false. His manifest motive for declining to take part in a mad enterprise of reconquest lay in his fixed determination not to commit his adopted country to a prolonged and disastrous conflict with Russia.

In another conversation with Las Cases, Napoleon threw upon Bernadotte the principal blame for the fall of the Empire.

" Bernadotte," he said, " was the serpent nourished in our bosom. He had no sooner left us than he entered the system of our enemies and became an object of fear and suspicion. Later on, he was one of the chief causes of our misfortunes. It was he who gave to our enemies the key of our policy and of our military tactics. It was he who led the way to our sacred soil. In vain did he plead as an excuse that, by accepting the throne of Sweden, he was bound to become a Swede. Banal excuse, good enough only for the multitude or for vulgar ambition. To take a wife it is not necessary to repudiate a mother, still less to stab her body, and to tear her entrails." ²

¹ Las Cases, iv. 133-134.

² Id., iii. 154.

To Dr. O'Meara, however, the Ex-Emperor said, in a more candid moment :

"Bernadotte was ungrateful to me, as I was the author of his greatness ; but I cannot say that he betrayed me. He, in a manner, became a Swede, and never promised what he did not intend to perform. I can accuse him of ingratitude, but not of treachery." ¹

The Emperor, when he acquitted Bernadotte of treachery, had in his mind what had occurred at the time of his marshal's acceptance of the succession to the Swedish throne. Napoleon had proposed a condition that Bernadotte should never bear arms against France, and had withdrawn it when Bernadotte had refused to agree to any condition of vassalage. In taking up arms, after Napoleon had invaded Swedish territory, Bernadotte had not broken faith.²

Swedish agents are said to have bargained for the suppression of passages in the *Memorials of St. Helena* which reflected on the ex-marshal. If so, the above quotations from Las Cases prove that they were not altogether successful. Bernadotte himself took no chances when he undertook a business of that kind. When the *Memoirs of Savary*, Duke of Rovigo, reached Stockholm, he prevented their circulation among his subjects by the simple expedient of buying up the whole edition.³

Having listened to what the fallen Emperor said at St. Helena about Bernadotte, let us shift the scene to Stockholm, and let us take note of what fell from Napoleon's ex-marshal about his former master. The references to himself in the *Memorials of St. Helena* were brought to Bernadotte's notice ; and his defence has been recorded by intimates with whom he discussed them.

He complained that, ever since their first meeting, Napoleon had never done him full justice. He did not attribute the Emperor's attitude towards him to hate, or even to unfriendliness, but to his settled policy of

¹ O'Meara, iii. 166.

² See pp. 245-246, *ante*.

³ Pingaud, 377.

preventing any other man from rivalling his own glory. The reason why he (Bernadotte) had had to suffer greater injuries than others was that he was less submissive and more frank in giving his opinions than the other marshals.

The ex-marshal went on to defend himself vigorously from the principal charges which were made against him in the conversations at St. Helena. He refused to believe that Napoleon had seriously reproached him for "having handed over to his enemies the keys of his policy, and for having led the way into the sacred soil of France."

He pointed out that he had used all his influence to persuade the Allies to abstain from invading France and to allow her to retain her natural boundaries¹; and he described Napoleon's accusations as rhetorical verbiage, which so great a man could never have put forward in a serious mood or in a grave sense.² He cited the many letters in which he had repeatedly warned and advised the Emperor in his best interests; and he asserted that Napoleon had forced him to defend himself and would have done the same thing in his place.

When charged with having fought against France he sometimes cited the precedent of the great Prince of Condé who had fought with Spain against France for eight years (1652-60). But it was easier for the Bonapartists to forgive Condé, who had been defeated on the dunes of Dunkirk, than to forgive Bernadotte who had been victorious whenever he met them.

The following passage in Bernadotte's defence of himself deserves to be quoted because it deals in a forcible way with a particular accusation which, owing to the picturesque language in which it was couched, has frequently been quoted and relied upon by Bonapartist writers:

"Suppose for a moment that Napoleon can have said that it 'is in vain for me to excuse myself on the ground that in accepting the throne of Sweden I became

¹ See pp. 284, 305, *ante*.

² Lafosse, iii. 244. Lafosse was an apologist; but he may safely be quoted where Bernadotte's point of view is to be ascertained.

a Swede, and that a man, when he takes a wife, should not disown his mother.' Well, I will put a parallel case which strikes me as very much in point. Let us suppose that, before Corsica became incorporated in France, France had invited Bonaparte to her throne, as Sweden has done to me. Do you think that, if Bonaparte had heard that the Corsicans had invaded Provence, he would have said, 'Having taken a wife, I must not disown my mother,' and that he would have allowed a free hand to the Corsicans? No. And do you think that I ought to be affected by the words which have been attributed to him? I attach no more importance to them than to the last shots fired by a routed army. . . . So far as I am concerned, I appeal to the facts, and I am confident that in the end they will speak, and that they will be heard." ¹

He then alluded to his own frank refusal to accept any condition against bearing arms against France when he became a Swede, and added: "After all, our destinies must be accomplished, as he himself said to me on the eve of my departure from France." ²

As time went on, Bernadotte's feelings softened towards Napoleon. He sometimes took pleasure in magnifying the Emperor's achievements; and on such occasions he showed a disposition to contrast the overweening ambition and consequent downfall of the Emperor with his own comparative moderation, and with the relative durability of his own success. He was in the habit of saying, "What misfortunes Napoleon would have avoided, if he had only listened to me."

On the day of Napoleon's death, 5th May 1821, he told his confidant, Count Brahé, that by some strange telepathy he had a presentiment that Napoleon had just breathed his last. When, a few weeks afterwards, the news of the Emperor's death reached him, he became convinced that on the 5th May he had been the recipient of a mysterious message. The English Minister at Stockholm reported to his Government that the King

¹ Lafosse, iii. 246.

² Pp. 245, 246, *ante*.

was sincerely affected by the event, and displayed a soldier's sympathy with the brother-in-arms to whom he owed so much of his fortune.¹ On this occasion he was heard to say :

" Napoleon has not been conquered by men. He was greater than us all. But God punished him because he relied on his own intelligence alone, until that prodigious instrument was strained to breaking point. Everything breaks in the end. The only things which can offer resistance are goodness of soul and purity of heart." ²

In the form of a letter to his son, the Swedish King delivered himself of a sort of funeral oration over the grave of the Ex-Emperor.

" He was the greatest captain," he wrote, " that has appeared upon the earth since Julius Cæsar. If, like Henri IV, he had enjoyed the advantage of having a Sully at his side, he might have regenerated Europe. If he was the greatest man of his age in his military conceptions, I surpassed him in method and in calculation." ³

A reciprocity of feeling gradually grew up between the ex-marshal and the Bonapartists. Bernadotte's success aroused in their minds a curious blend of resentment and of pride. They adhered to the charge of " treachery," although it had been negatived by Napoleon himself and had been refuted by one of the greatest of the Presidents of the Third Republic. But they used the word " treachery " rhetorically, as did Balzac in one of his novels, where he put these words into the mouth of an Austerlitz veteran :

" What a grand time was the Empire ! Colonels became generals ; marshals became kings ; and there still remains one survivor to remind Europe of the legend, although he is a Gascon who betrayed his country in order to save his crown." ⁴

By degrees the legend of the Empire strengthened its

¹ F.O., 73/142.

³ Id., 368, citing D'Agault.

² Pingaud, 368.

⁴ Balzac, *Le Médecin de Campagne*, xxi.

hold upon Bernadotte's memory and upon his imagination. He frequently discussed the career of Napoleon, and compared it with that of Peter the Great. When he heard that Napoleon's remains had been brought home, and had been borne under the Arc de Triomphe by the veterans of the Empire, he exclaimed with emotion, "You may say of me that I was once a Marshal of France, and that now I am only King of Sweden."¹

Twenty-four years had elapsed since Bernadotte had first met Napoleon at Mantua in 1797.² Their careers and characters presented many contrasts.

Napoleon was educated at a famous military college and started as an officer. Bernadotte began as a friendless recruit, spent eleven years in the ranks, and was educated by experience and self-culture.

Napoleon was the more magnificent gambler. He played for unlimited stakes, and never stooped to compromise with Fate. When he fell, Byron could write :

Since he, miscalled the Morning Star,
Nor man nor fiend hath fallen so far.

Bernadotte, when left to himself, played for safety. It was when he was faced by a desperate or unavoidable emergency, as at Teining, at the Tagliamento and at Mohrungen, or when he had staked his reputation, as at Gradisca, at Halle and at Lübeck, or his country and his crown as in the War of Liberation, that he displayed unsurpassable resourcefulness and strength. In the absence of some compelling cause, he was disposed to be circumspect and to take no unnecessary risks.

Napoleon overshadowed him by his indifference to mere glory or praise. Power was Napoleon's pole-star ; and Talleyrand was thinking of their respective types when he remarked that "The love of glory can only make a great hero. Contempt of it makes a great man."

But, in their respective methods of exercising power, Bernadotte outshone Napoleon, who often showed himself arbitrary, harsh and unrestrained, while Bernadotte was always moderate, beneficent and compassionate.

¹ Pingaud, 422.

² See p. 45, *ante*.

CHAPTER XLI

THE KING'S RELATIONS WITH FRANCE

1818-1844

KING CHARLES XIV's accession received regular recognition from all the European Governments, and a plentiful shower of congratulations descended upon him from his brother sovereigns. Those which came from the English Prince Regent and from Lord Castlereagh were prompt and cordial; but many others of these ceremonial messages were hollow and insincere. For example, the Austrian Minister at Stockholm was heard to remark in a moment of candour, "All Europe would see this dynasty disappear without regret."

Quite genuine were the felicitations of the Czar, to whom Bernadotte's personality and foreign policy were equally acceptable. Alexander closed a cordial letter with a stimulating compliment.

"The success," he wrote, "with which Your Majesty has known how to maintain both your dignity and your glory under the most difficult circumstances is a sure warrant of the justice and wisdom which will mark the history of your reign."

King Louis XVIII of France united with the other European sovereigns in recognising their Swedish "brother's" accession. But he was the only one of them who allowed the mask to slide. He despatched a special envoy to Stockholm, but he refrained from making him the bearer of any decoration or other compliment suitable to the occasion. Bernadotte retaliated by retaining on the roll of his Order of the Seraphim the name of Napoleon and of the ex-King Joseph of Spain.

Louis XVIII renewed his instructions to his envoy to note Bernadotte's defects and to report how best to counteract and undermine one whom he regarded as an "objectionable *parvenu*." The French envoy obeyed, but was frank enough to qualify his report by adding that Bernadotte remained French in sympathy and that he was "animated by many generous and even chivalrous sentiments."

Louis XVIII's successor on the throne of France was Charles X. He took up the cause of the young Gustavus, the Swedish pretender, until the French Minister at Stockholm reported that the Vasas' cause was a lost one and that the Swedish nation had "the bad taste to be satisfied with their *parvenu* King." Charles X now changed his tune. Gustavus was no longer described as a Prince of Sweden; and he was given a shadowy consolation by being put forward as a candidate for the throne of Greece.

Bernadotte took pleasure in responding to these friendly gestures by expressing sympathy with Charles X's policy of Algerian expansion. He told his intimates that France could not exist without glory, and that, if he had enough men and money, he would be willing to take part in the campaign. He expressed himself in true Gascon fashion: "I shall willingly shed nineteen-twentieths of my blood for Sweden, but the remaining twentieth will be at the disposal of France."¹ A Franco-Russian *rapprochement* would have suited Bernadotte, by enabling him to play a useful and a brilliant part as a link or a mediator in such a combination.

The Revolution of 1830 which resulted in the election of Louis Philippe to be the Constitutional King of France accorded with Bernadotte's political sympathies and convictions. He saw the tricolour flag once more take the place of the white banner of the Bourbons. But his foreign policy was entangled with that of Russia. So he refrained from recognising King Louis Philippe until he had informed himself as to the attitude of the Czar.

Meanwhile the Prince of the Moskowa, the son and

¹ Pingaud, 373.

successor of Marshal Ney, arrived in Sweden as the bearer of a letter from King Louis Philippe inviting Swedish recognition. He had been chosen for this mission because his father, Marshal Ney, had been an intimate friend of the King of Sweden's, who had given his friend's son a commission in the Swedish army.

Bernadotte felt embarrassed by King Louis Philippe's mission; and the inexperienced envoy saved him from his embarrassment by flying the tricolour flag from the balcony of the French Legation before the Orleans dynasty of which it was the emblem had been recognised by Sweden. This breach of diplomatic etiquette gave the King an excuse for not receiving him. When Russia had recognised Louis Philippe, young Ney was forgiven on conditions which included the pulling down of his flag.¹

The French envoy might fairly have turned the tables upon Bernadotte by reminding him of the example which he had set when, as Ambassador of the French Directory, he had hoisted the tricolour over the Embassy at Vienna in 1798, and had earned the nickname of "the man of Vienna with the little flag."²

This inauspicious incident created a bad impression at the Tuileries; and the French Court began mixing itself up once more with intrigues for the restoration of the Vasas. These intrigues caused no apprehensions to Bernadotte, who declared himself willing to give a safe-conduct to the Ex-King Gustavus and his son to visit Sweden, so little did he fear their rivalry; but the participation of the French Government in such projects wounded him in a tender spot, and exasperated him against the Orleans dynasty.

Trouble impended for several years between the two Courts and finally came to a head in 1833, through the production at the Palais Royal Theatre in Paris of a comedy entitled *Le Camarade de Lit*, in which the King of Sweden was introduced as one of the principal charac-

¹ F.O., 73/142, cf. Pingaud, 395.

² See p. 79, *ante*.

ters. The piece was a great success and was chosen by King Louis Philippe to be played at a fête in the Champs Élysées.

The plot of the play represented an ex-grenadier of the Royal-la-Marine Regiment as going to Stockholm to see his former comrade, Ex-Sergeant Bernadotte. The quondam mess-mates meet in the Royal Park, dine together and celebrate the occasion by donning the uniform of their former regiment. Exhilarated by their repast, they indulge in reminiscences, in the course of which the ex-grenadier reminds the King that he had once tattooed his arm with gunpowder. Carried away by old associations the King pulls up his sleeve and displays the indelible imprint of a Phrygian Cap and of a revolutionary motto, which is said to have been *Mort aux Rois*. The disclosure of this secret tatouage is the turning-point of the piece. The King is placed in such a dilemma by this compromising discovery that, in order to save himself from the necessity of abdication, he is compelled to give his consent to the marriage of the hero and the heroine, thus bringing the curtain down upon a happy ending to the play. Perhaps it was this play which gave colour to a legend, which afterwards obtained wide currency, that Bernadotte was tattooed with republican devices.

Bernadotte was indignant when he heard that he was being lampooned in a Parisian theatre, and that the French King had "commanded" a performance of the objectionable piece. He was particularly annoyed at the suggestion of an "abdication," the possibility of which had been mooted by the Opposition in the Diet and had become the subject of gossip and discussion in Sweden. His wrath was redoubled when he was informed that the authors of the piece had promised the Parisian public a new play on the same theme, entitled *Le Roi Jean*.

The Marquis de St. Simon, a descendant of the celebrated author of *Memoirs*, was the French Minister at Stockholm. On the occasion of an official dinner, St. Simon found an opportunity of offering some friendly

assurances, on behalf of the King of France, to the King of Sweden, who replied in bitter accents, " That is all very well. But, at a time like the present, the first condition of reciprocal confidence is good faith. Can you assure me that your Sovereign is sincere ? "

St. Simon reported this conversation to the French King with the result that there ensued a complete breach of diplomatic relations between France and Sweden, which lasted until the quarrel was adjusted in the following year by the friendly intervention of England. The French Government promised to prevent the Parisian theatres from burlesquing Bernadotte, who responded by agreeing to treat the incident as one of those unfortunate mistakes which may sometimes occur even in the most united families, for he claimed to belong to the family of France.

When the Swedish Court, soon afterwards, danced a quadrille, the music for which was arranged by Prince Oscar from Auber's opera *Gustave III*, the French diplomats shook their heads, and ventured to ask what would have been said if King Louis Philippe had danced at the Tuileries to Gustavian music.¹

After the settlement of this dispute a change for the better gradually became observable in the relations between Bernadotte and France. With his native town of Pau he kept up a frequent interchange of compliments. He sent his portrait and a collection of Swedish medals to the local museum, and some vases of Swedish porphyry for the adornment of the Castle of Pau. He offered to purchase the house in which he had been born and to endow it as a retreat for ex-service veterans ; and he won golden opinions by providing liberally for a peasant woman who had been his foster-sister.² A local legend traced his descent to a fabled dame of the neighbourhood who had in the distant past prophesied that a King would be among her descendants. The magistrates of Pau named one of

¹ F.O., 73/149-156 ; 27/480 ; Pingaud, 395-412. The English Lord Chamberlain had prohibited the performance of *Le Camarade de Lit* at Drury Lane.

² See p. 3, *ante*.

their streets after him, and took every opportunity of coupling his name with that of the most famous of their townsmen, King Henri IV.

The *rapprochement* which started at Pau found its way to Paris. Frenchmen began to take pride in the reflection that one half of Bernadotte's career and all his talents belonged to France.¹ His name was inscribed upon the Arc de Triomphe, and his portrait was placed in the Gallery of Marshals at Versailles. That great statesman and historian, Thiers, from the Tribune of the French Chamber of Deputies, absolved him from the imputation of treachery by declaring that, when Bernadotte became Crown Prince of Sweden, he became a Swede unreservedly and must be judged from that standpoint.²

Bernadotte took every opportunity of responding to these advances. When Marshal Mortier fell a victim to Fieschi's infernal machine, the Swedish King sent a message of sympathy and regret in the character of a former comrade-in-arms. He conferred Swedish decorations upon Marshals Soult and Gérard, upon a former Colonel of the regiment Royal-la-Marine under whom he had once served in the ranks,³ and upon several French officers who had campaigned under him in the wars of the Empire. He delighted in welcoming French visitors at Stockholm, and charmed them by the cordiality of his reception and by his animated conversation.

"Do not speak to me of 1813," he said to Xavier Marmier. "My innermost feelings (*mes entrailles*) are moved when I think of it. If I had a thousand kingdoms to give to France, I could not discharge the debt of gratitude which I owe to her."⁴

He would have been gratified if he could have foreseen that a time would come when one of his descendants would be welcomed by the French Government as a "grandson of France."

¹ One of them in the middle of a diatribe refers to him as *un glorieux capitaine de nos grandes époques*.

² September, 1831; Pingaud, 412; see p. 334, *ante*.

³ Colonel Morard d'Arces, see p. 7n., *ante*.

⁴ Pingaud, 420.

CHAPTER XLII

THE KING'S RELATIONS WITH ENGLAND

1818—1844

Now let us turn to the King's relations with Great Britain. So long as he had been a Frenchman, Bernadotte had been an *ex-officio* enemy of England. Thrice¹ he had aspired to, or had been designated for, a command in a campaign against England. But within a few months of his landing in Sweden, he formed a settled conviction, from which he never swerved, that, to quote his own words—

“his personal interest and feelings, as well as the commercial, geographical and political situation of Sweden, alike dictated a policy of cultivating the strictest alliance, friendship, and affection with England.”²

A deep impression was made upon his mind by the course which the English Government took in 1810 when Napoleon forced Sweden to declare war against England. The English Government, recognising that Sweden was acting under duress, ignored the declaration of war, and neither took offence nor bore malice.³ Bernadotte's attitude of mind towards England ever afterwards was one of gratitude and respect. He used to say “that England had never acted harshly towards Sweden, and often had been her best friend,” that England was “the greatest country on the face of the globe, and deserved to be so,” and that he was determined not only to maintain friendly relations with England, but to “ensure their continuance after his death.” On one occasion he exclaimed that he would always impress upon his son that, “next to the favour of the Almighty and the

¹ In 1798, 1801 and 1805.

² F.O., 73/114.

³ P. 259, *ante*.

good-will of his own subjects, the friendship of England ought to be his chief object."¹

The King was in the habit of referring to Sweden as " the advanced post of England in the north of Europe," and that " without England all balance of power would be lost, and this would mean the ruin of the secondary Powers of Europe." Once he spoke of Sweden as " politically speaking, placed in the English sea," and as " seeking repose only under the protection of Britain."¹

As time went on, when Sweden began to feel the pinch of Russian aggression, he looked to England as his best safeguard against the advance of the " Colossus of the North." As between these two Great Powers he used to say that Sweden had " less to fear and more to hope for from England," and he laid down for Sweden a policy of neutrality towards Russia and England, with this difference—that, while hostilities with Russia were to be avoided, but might have to be faced some day, the possibility of hostilities with England was not to be entertained for an instant. His attitude to England was dictated by Swedish policy. As an English diplomat put it rather cynically: " His interests guarantee his sincerity."²

Speaking to Sir Thomas Cartwright, he once remarked :

" I beg you will tell Lord Palmerston that my policy will be strict neutrality, as long as I can preserve it ; that in no case will I ever embark in hostilities with England, and with Russia only at the last extremity when war with her is unavoidable."

Again, when apprehensions were entertained on the part of England, that he might succumb to the insinuating flattery with which the Russian Emperor tried to play upon his vanity and upon his *amour-propre*, he remarked to the English Minister that—

" nothing would make him swerve from a strict and faithful neutrality, that he had resisted all Bonaparte's efforts to make him break with England, and that if all the in-

¹ F.O., 73/104.

² F.O., 73/120, 143, 165.

fluence and threats of the man who had intimidated Europe could not induce him to abandon the course which he thought best for Sweden, England might take it as a guarantee that he would now resist every attempt to draw him from his policy of neutrality.”¹

Only twice did he have any serious difference with the English Government. The first falling out was over his refusal to carry out the financial arrangements which were consequential upon the transfer of Norway from Denmark. He considered that Denmark had played him false; and it was not until Lord Castlereagh and the Czar had united in bringing pressure upon Sweden that Bernadotte at last gave way. The second misunderstanding was in reference to the Levantine imbroglio in 1840. In a conversation with Sir Thomas Cartwright he was understood to promise his “support” to England and to her Allies against France in certain eventualities. Later on, he explained that he only intended his “moral support,” which was not what the English Minister had understood.²

In the latter years of Bernadotte’s reign the Russian danger became so imminent that he was forced to take steps for fortifying both Stockholm and the frontier between Swedish and Russian Lapland, and for devising elaborate plans for the defence of the whole eastern coast-line of Sweden. He made no secret of these preparations and of his readiness to defend the independence of Sweden if it should be attacked. In 1837 he sent an assurance to the English Foreign Office that “though Sweden is small and I am most pacifically inclined, should anyone try to take from me an inch of ground they would find in me, old as I am, the ambition of a great Power.”³

When the Czar visited Stockholm in 1838, Bernadotte broached the subject to him in terms which were peculiarly figurative. He said that he did “not, like the Doge

¹ F.O., 73/175, 176.

² F.O., 73/183, September–October, 1840.

³ F.O., 73/196, August 26th, 1837.

of Venice who pretended to be the sole husband of the Adriatic, pretend to be the sole husband of the Baltic, but he certainly was one of her husbands, and as such would be much affected by a war between Russia and England." In such a case he was resolved to maintain a strict neutrality and he hoped that His Imperial Majesty would not attempt to force him into any other course. The Emperor cordially grasped the King's hand, but prudently made no reply.¹

As a general rule, the British Ministers at Stockholm admired the King, made allowance for his difficulties, and were amazed at his phenomenal success. There were exceptions, for we find Lord Howard de Walden, in 1833, attributing to him timidity, jealousy, vanity and dissimulation.² To the English diplomats in Stockholm and in Christiania Bernadotte's political proceedings sometimes appeared to be vacillating and dilatory. Occasionally they were moved to describe the King's internal policy as "mad" or "inconceivable," and to anticipate a rising or even a revolution. But they failed to appreciate the methods of his "madness," and the ideas which underlay what to them seemed to be "inconceivable," and they did not realise that there was a reserve-fund of public gratitude and prestige which the King had saved up and could always fall back upon.

His manner of speaking and acting was somewhat bewildering; but it was not by any means unsuited to the Swedish people, who were sometimes spoken of as "the Gascons of the North." Instead of embarking upon a campaign of coercion he frequently preferred to employ his native weapons of bluff and mystification, or to resort to strategic manœuvres of advance and retreat which he borrowed from his military experience. By these means he usually got his way in the end, or seized a psychological moment for some favourable compromise. His critics were constantly disappointed in their pessimistic prognostications, and were forced to report that, to their surprise, the King had gained his object where

¹ F.O., 73/168, 169, 175.

² F.O., 73/150 (Despatch of April 1833).

they had prophesied failure, had acted loyally where they suspected dissimulation, and had dispelled the mists which had seemed to becloud his popularity.

A report from another British diplomat, Mr. J. D. Bligh, from which the following passages are extracted, is more discriminating and shows a juster appreciation of the peculiar difficulties of the King's situation than that of Lord Howard de Walden :

“ The King possesses talents the notoriety of which was in a great measure instrumental in procuring for him the position in which he is now placed, as well as prudence, which has much assisted him in maintaining that position ; the former have not diminished, the latter has probably increased, by advancing years. His inability to speak Swedish and his dislike to appearing in public have not injured his popularity owing to his close application to business, and his accessibility to everyone. He has conciliated the nobles so far that none regret the ejected dynasty. The ebullitions of passion to which his advisers are exposed, and the disagreeable position in which they often find themselves through his adherence to his own opinions, are disregarded because they realise his superior judgment. He is beloved by the army, who see in him a general famous for his former achievements, and a Sovereign who treats them with the utmost affability and kindness.” ¹

Bernadotte always preferred, and sometimes requested, that the foreign Ministers to be accredited to his Court should be military men of distinction. He felt more at home with soldiers than with civilians. The preference for his own cloth explains why, of the many diplomats who represented England at Stockholm during Charles XIV's reign, the one whom he seems to have found most congenial was Major-General Lord Bloomfield, who had been one of the original officers of the Horse Artillery when that corps was instituted. Many a “ camp-fire conversation ” between them was introduced by the King with the phrase “ *Je vous parle, mon général, en camarade,* ” ²

¹ F.O., 73/169, January 1837.

² F.O., 73/46 (16th November, 1832).

and on one occasion, when His Majesty was elated and gratified by the perusal of a complimentary despatch from Lord Palmerston, he let himself go with the exclamation, "*Mon général, je m'abandonne à vous, comme si nous étions camarades en bivouac.*"¹

In a conversation with Lord Bloomfield, who was himself an Irish *sabreur*, the King gave an interesting account of his own narrow escape from having been involved in an invasion of Ireland.² After speaking very sympathetically of Ireland, he referred to Lord Edward Fitzgerald's mission to the French Government as an emissary from the Irish rebels. He said that Lord Edward asked the French Government to send General Bernadotte with an army of 20,000 men, and that he held out sanguine hopes of success. "Our plan," said the King, "was to make a naval demonstration at the mouth of the river Shannon, but to make the real descent upon the coast of Antrim." Bernadotte declared that the execution of this plan was delayed by two events which occurred in 1798, namely, his own marriage and Lord Edward Fitzgerald's death. He added that afterwards the affair "degenerated into the well-known Humbert expedition."

He confessed to Lord Bloomfield that, when he had been a French general, he had looked upon the subject of a separation of Ireland from England as a political *coup* of the greatest importance, because it would have deprived England of one of the principal sources from which she drew her soldiers and her supplies.

The whirligig of time had brought its revenge. Bernadotte, as King of Sweden, found England, of all foreign nations, his most reliable friend. The Russian menace gave him constant anxiety. The pin-pricks which his French compatriots occasionally inflicted upon him caused him deep annoyance and chagrin. But the relations between him and the English Government were—almost without a break—loyal and friendly.

It seems to be reasonable to excuse French Imperialists for judging Bernadotte harshly. They attributed the

¹ F.O., 73/114, 142, 146.

² F.O., 73/123.

defeat of Napoleon and the downfall of the Empire to his intervention, and they were slow to accept his plea that he had become a Swede. On the other hand, there seems to be some inconsistency in the attitude of those anti-Bonapartist historians who dwell upon the intolerable tyranny which Napoleon imposed upon the nations of Europe, yet fail to do justice to the Swedish Crown Prince who made such sacrifices and took such risks in order to resist it.

Perhaps it was the Gascon extravagance of his language and of some of his methods that prejudiced foreign writers against him, and prevented them from duly appreciating his high sense of duty, his far-sightedness, his genius for action and leadership, the signal services which he rendered to Europe by making his Kingdom an influence for peace instead of a storm-centre, and the good relations between Sweden and other nations which he fostered and bequeathed to his successors. It was as a brave and skilful soldier that he built up his reputation ; but it was as a pacific statesman that he did his best work.

In Sweden he was scattering seed on fruitful ground. He was helping to plant in his Kingdoms a peace-loving public opinion which has found its expression in our time in Alfred Nobel's prizes for the furtherance of international brotherhood, and in the useful part which Sweden has played quite recently in the Councils of the Nations.

CHAPTER XLIII

HOW BERNADOTTE ESTABLISHED HIS DYNASTY IN SWEDEN

1818-1844

THE King's greatest handicap in governing his two Kingdoms was his ignorance of their languages. He never tried to learn Norwegian. He began to learn Swedish, but he did not persist in the attempt. Once he read the King's Speech in Swedish from a phoneticised manuscript, but the result was so discouraging that he never repeated the experiment. The Crown Prince Oscar, who was brought up as a Swede, frequently acted as his father's interpreter or representative on public occasions.

The King often sat for hours as a listener to speeches and discussions of which he did not understand a word. His despatches and Royal Speeches were composed by him in French and had to be translated into Swedish or Norwegian as the case might be. As a result, complaints were sometimes made in the Diet that the King's Government was being carried on "through the medium of a system of mutilated translations." ¹

The King had to sign yearly about 12,000 official documents, all of which, as well as the Agenda of the Council, had to be translated and explained to him. Delay and misunderstanding resulted, and the labour of government was greatly increased. It was generally recognised that the King did his best to inform himself about all the details of his daily duties ; but it was not always possible for him to obtain a true conception of the facts of each problem, or an entirely just idea of the public opinion of his subjects. It was not uncommon to see his apart-

¹ F.O., 73/121, 175 ; Pingaud, 337, 360.

ment strewn with official papers awaiting his signature, which he withheld until he knew what they were about.

He was always *en vedette*, fearing mistakes, and sometimes even suspicious of deception. On one occasion some revenue laws created public discontent which was justified by their undue severity. The King declared that they could not have been correctly translated to him or he would not have signed them.

On another occasion he broached a question at the Council, which the Councillors declared had already been determined at a previous sitting. Not having any recollection or any note of the determination he suspected a plot to obtain his assent unawares. The incident occasioned an animated scene, and it was with difficulty that he was persuaded by the members of the Council that he had given a decision which had escaped his memory.¹

A thorough knowledge of French, and a facility in speaking it, became essential qualifications for the highest offices. A Councillor of State had to resign because he could not express himself with sufficient ease in the only language which the King could understand. The same inconvenience was experienced in foreign affairs. The foreign despatches had to be translated into French before they were laid before Bernadotte.²

In spite of his ignorance of his subjects' language, Bernadotte displayed a remarkable facility in accommodating himself to his new environment. What a contrast there was between those two environments! France with her Latin ancestry and her face to the sun, and Sweden where the racial traditions, the physical conditions, and the cultural background were so entirely different. Yet he seemed to find no difficulty in adapting himself to the change. We are reminded of the ease with which a well-handled ship drops its old moorings and makes fast at a new anchorage.³

In spite of his ignorance of the language in which

¹ F.O., 73/109 ; Schefer, 190.

² F.O., 73/81.

³ Emile Faguet wrote that Bernadotte's career showed that "un cadet de Gascogne n'est déplacé, ni surtout désorienté, nulle part."



KING CHARLES XIV (JEAN BAPTISTE BERNADOTTE).

After the portrait by F. Westin.

they thought and reasoned, the King was generally successful in gaining a moral ascendancy over his Councillors and Ministers. Among them were statesmen of first-rate ability; but his marvellous career, his varied experience of affairs, and the prestige of his military and political achievements gave him an irresistible predominance. In the discussion of foreign affairs he figured like a Triton among minnows.

A Secretary of State, Count Platen, when reproached for want of independence in his relations with the King, said by way of defence: "The hero who defeated the first soldiers of Europe at Dennewitz cannot be treated by his Council as a figure-head or as a mere mechanical signatory of state documents." An English agent informed the British Government that a Secretary of State carried some documents relating to a delicate subject of foreign policy continually in his pocket so that he might seize a favourable opportunity of submitting them to Bernadotte when he might be in the humour for such business.¹

Among his Ministers were many men of conspicuous merit such as D'Engeström, Wetterstedt and the brothers Charles and Gustave Löwenhjelm. The King received and weighed their advice but did not necessarily follow it. He insisted upon holding the helm himself, and did not allow the ship of state to drift or to be steered by other hands. Within well-defined limits he was enabled to exercise an extensive influence upon the Government of Sweden.² For example, with the King lay the power of declaring war and of concluding treaties, after stating the reasons to his Council and after hearing what they had to say. He was commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy; and in many branches of administration his prestige and popularity contributed to make his authority predominant. His sceptres were symbols of real power, which he wielded tenaciously and tactfully.

Bernadotte followed Napoleon's example in organising a private police which kept him informed, *à la Fouché*,

¹ F.O., 73/69.

² Schefer, *Bernadotte Roi*, 5.

of the trend of public opinion under the surface. The knowledge which he acquired in this way sometimes prompted him to take a line of his own against the advice of his Ministers.

Neither Napoleon nor Bernadotte could without mockery impute ambition to the other as a crime. But Bernadotte's ambition marched hand-in-hand with a passion for the study of the problems of national prosperity and happiness; while Napoleon gave them comparatively slight attention. Napoleon had seized power everywhere at the point of the bayonet, Bernadotte had waited for it to fall into his lap. Bernadotte's ambition recognised constitutional boundaries, Napoleon's recognised none.

While Napoleon grasped incessantly at the urn of destiny, Bernadotte was content to wait until the course of events placed it within his reach. While Napoleon dreamt of limitless predominance, Bernadotte was satisfied with insular isolation. While Napoleon waved his mailed fist in the face of the world, Bernadotte seldom allowed the strong hand to peep from beneath its velvet glove. These contrasts go far towards explaining why it was that Napoleon's empire blazed and fell like a meteor, while the stability of Bernadotte's dynasty developed gradually, silently and durably. Others have climbed more quickly and to giddier heights than Bernadotte, but few have obtained a surer footing after a steeper ascent.¹

In foreign affairs the King's watchwords were Peace, Neutrality and Non-intervention. In home affairs he did not pursue any settled line of policy. He was a progressive Conservative, and a dynastic opportunist. In the political battle-field he yielded ground as slowly as he had been wont to do as a rearguard leader in his early campaigns. Being instinctively fearful of change, and being prudent and cautious in temperament, he might have been an absolutist if his tendencies in that direction had not been moderated by a lingering attachment to the

¹ "C'est le seul qui passa roi, et qui le resta" (*Revue Bleue*, 18th Jan. 1902).

popular ideals of the French Revolution, by a genuine respect for the national institutions which it was his duty to maintain, by a real gift for good government, and by an innate longing to please and satisfy everybody around him.

Although the King succeeded in dominating his Swedish Ministers and Council of State, it was not possible for him to exercise the same authority over his Parliaments. In the Diet a vigorous opposition grew up which by degrees gained recruits, especially among the nobles and the peasants. During the first decade of his reign their progress was slow and their influence was slender. The old-fashioned view of the Constitution continued to prevail, namely, that the Diet should confine its attentions to questions of finance and of legislation, and should leave the work of government to the King acting with the advice of his Council of State. Indeed, the parliamentary opposition in Sweden might never have taken a formidable shape if it had not been for the revolutionary wave which swept Europe in 1830 and sprinkled Sweden with its spray.

In Sweden this revolutionary spirit found expression in the production of an evening newspaper, the editor of which was a radical sprig of nobility named Hierta. Hierta carried on a vigorous onslaught upon the Ministry and upon the King in a spirit of bitter irony under a thin veil of mock respect. One example will serve to illustrate Hierta's methods. The King, in his speech from the throne, had referred to himself as the "universal father of his people" (*père commun du peuple*). Hierta's journal feigned to misunderstand the allusion, and complimented the King upon the deep religious feeling which he displayed by this "touching reference to the Almighty."

The Press Law of that day required every newspaper to register its title and to obtain official sanction, and enabled the Government to suppress any newspaper in which dangerous matter had appeared and to restrain its future publication. Hierta succeeded in driving a coach-and-four through these press regulations. He

obtained authorisation for the publication of nineteen different newspapers, each with a different title and edited by a different man of straw. He published his "dangerous matter" in one after another of these papers, having eighteen substitutes to fall back upon in case of the suppression of any one or more of his journals. As a result, the Press Law became powerless to control Hierta and his nineteen journals.¹

Still more annoying to the King was the affair of Captain Lindeberg, a political writer who was refused a licence to open a play-house. He published a protest against what he represented as "a monopoly," since the royal theatres were the property of the King. Lindeberg's printing office was searched and some of his papers were seized. Hierta's journal pretended to have obtained a copy of one of them, which was a satirical lampoon on the King entitled "The Sovereign with the long nose," or "King Tutu and his dear son." The High Court of Justice convicted Lindeberg of high treason and sentenced him to death, which the King forthwith remitted.

The Constitution contained a curious rule which made it optional for a prisoner to accept or to refuse a royal reprieve; and Lindeberg, well knowing that the King would never allow him to be executed, refused to accept the reprieve, and insisted on submitting to the penalty of death. Thereupon the public stage was occupied for several months by an amusing comedy, in which Lindeberg's friends lauded him to the skies as a hero and a martyr, while the Government tried to cajole Lindeberg into accepting the favour of his life from the Crown. At last the King cut the knot by granting an official amnesty upon the anniversary of his landing in Sweden. The amnesty, under the terms of which Lindeberg's sentence was commuted to one of three years' detention in a fortress, included many others besides Lindeberg, who thus found himself pardoned against his will.²

Another incident of the same kind occurred in 1838, when the King was in his seventy-fifth year. A

¹ Schefer, 244-249.

² Id., 249-254.

pamphleteer named Crusenstople was sentenced to three years' detention in a fortress. A riot ensued which had to be suppressed by force. The King complained bitterly of the ingratitude of his people, and afterwards referred to this period as one of the most miserable of his life.

When the Swedish Diet assembled in January 1840, the King had to face a storm which it taxed all his skill and sang-froid to ride out. The various elements of the parliamentary opposition united for a common purpose, which was "nothing less than abdication." The movement was not directed against the dynasty, but against what was regarded as the ultra-conservatism of the monarch. Perhaps it was his varied experience of revolutions and *coups d'état* which made him suspicious of the designs of the political reformers. The proposal was to compel him to relinquish the crown in favour of his son Prince Oscar, whose opinions were believed to be more progressive than those of his father.

The impassioned style of the King's speech from the throne vividly reflected the seriousness of the crisis. The calmness and composure which are characteristic of such occasions were cast aside. The old Gascon renewed his youth, and his oration blazed with eloquence and passion. He painted in glowing colours the prosperity of Sweden, and contrasted it with the abasement and depression which had prevailed when he had landed on its shores thirty years back.

The King went on to invoke God to witness his ardent zeal for the happiness of his people, and struck the chord of pity by reminding the Diet of his age and of the end that must be near. "Before descending into the tomb I appeal to you once more to understand your Government. . . . National prosperity and independence can only be consolidated by the love of concord, justice and obedience to law." His peroration had something about it that was daring and pathetic :

"When summoned, as I soon must be in the course of nature, to another life, I shall implore the benediction

of the Creator for the two peoples, who, when left to themselves, are adorned by so many virtues, and who have given me so many touching proofs of their affection and of their gratitude.”

The King's speech failed to stem the torrent. A shower of amendments to the Address and of venomous impeachments proceeded from the Opposition. The King and his Government entrenched themselves behind the Constitution ; and the onslaughts of the attacking party were broken one after the other. None of the amendments succeeded in passing the four Houses of Parliament. None of the impeachments resulted in a conviction. A proposal to dismiss several members of the Supreme Court failed in obtaining the majority which the Constitution required.

The Council of State, finding themselves unable to work with the Diet, offered their resignation. The King persuaded them to remain at their posts, but arranged the honourable retirement on the ground of age of an unpopular councillor, thus weakening the forces of the attack, without appearing to yield to it.

The Diet lasted eighteen months during which period the old King, by his imperturbable sang-froid and patience, gradually gave confidence and strength to the conservative forces of the Kingdom. The parliamentary Opposition lost prestige and support, when one after another of their violent assaults upon the Constitution and the royal authority proved fruitless and ineffective. One important reform was accepted by the King. A measure was passed giving to Ministers of State a more real power and a more effective influence in the Council. The Coalition, which had opened the session with the cry of “ Abdication,” found at its close that they had to be satisfied with this single and comparatively slender success ; and the brave old King, whose last parliamentary conflict it was, was able to claim that “ if he had not won a victory, he had at all events bivouacked on the field of battle.”

Bernadotte could not have retained his throne in the

face of so much parliamentary opposition if it had not been recognised that he religiously observed the rules, and paid homage to the principles, of the Constitutions of his two Kingdoms respectively. More than once he was encouraged by the heads of the army to enforce his will by a military *coup*; but he would not listen to such proposals. He used to say that the Swedes had created their own institutions and had called him from a distant land to defend them, and that he was determined to obey their call.¹ Yet he always yielded when the popular will had succeeded in obtaining constitutional sanction.

The King never shrank from meeting his Parliaments. On the contrary he sometimes challenged them by calling an extraordinary meeting of the Diet in an emergency. More than once, when he might have taken shelter, he preferred to face and outride the storm.

His reverence for constituted authority had handicapped him in his rivalry with Napoleon. The iconoclast of institutions and of constitutions, in a revolutionary age, always has an advantage over their idolater. But, when he became King, this quality became one of the secrets of his complete conquest of public confidence, and of the progressive stabilisation of his throne and dynasty.

The higher he rose, the more isolated he became. Sometimes his position was so lonely as to be comparable to that of a marooned mariner watching a stormy sea from a solitary peak. Once he was heard to say :

“ If I had not a son, I should have preferred to live alone on a wild mountain with an old servant to make me a bowl of soup than to endure all the troubles and disappointments of my early years in the government of Sweden.”

This loneliness had the effect of making his emotions flow towards his subjects and of driving him to concentrate his energies upon the task of governing and of stabilising his dynasty.

¹ F.O., 73/50, 121/154.

CHAPTER XLIV

HOW BERNADOTTE ESTABLISHED HIS DYNASTY IN NORWAY

1818-1844

WE have traced some of the difficulties with which the King had to contend in Sweden. A wholly dissimilar set of problems faced him in Norway, where the national traditions, the temperament of the people, and the State Constitution were quite different. Under the Norwegian Constitution the King had only a suspensory Veto upon legislation, and was obliged to bow to the will of the Parliament when it had been expressed by the vote of three successive Storthings. King Charles XIV entertained a strong objection to this limitation upon his royal authority. His repeated efforts to remove this restriction upon his Veto brought him into constant collision with the Storting. In vain did he seek to persuade the Norwegian deputies to their undoing.

The Norwegians were more democratic than the Swedes. They objected not merely to the possession of privileges by a favoured class, but to the very existence of a titled aristocracy. The Norwegian nobility was of Danish origin and of comparatively modern growth. The nobles possessed very few of those sources of influence and prestige which in Sweden had linked the aristocracy with the history and traditions of the people and had rendered it a source of national strength. The Norwegian people regarded the peasantry, who traced their origin to the old Norse chieftains, as the true *noblesse* of Norway.

This question was the occasion of a serious conflict between Bernadotte and the Storting, which twice passed a measure for the abolition of the nobility. The

King on both occasions refused his sanction, and left nothing undone to obstruct and to oppose the passing of the law for a third time. He tried to postpone or side-track it and was suspected of contemplating a *coup d'état*. But the Storting stuck to its guns ; and the King finally yielded, as he always yielded, when the decision of three Storthings in succession had been given against him.¹ In this controversy one of the reasons which is said to have operated on the King's mind was an apprehension that, if he consented to the abolition of the nobility in Norway, he would be regarded in Sweden and abroad as a revolutionary King.²

Norway looked at Sweden with a jealous eye. The King made his home in Sweden, only visiting Norway at duty's call. This was the natural consequence of events. He used to speak of Sweden as his "elder daughter," because it was Sweden that had first elected him Crown Prince, and he had been a Swedish prince for four years when the Crown of Norway was added to his patrimony. But Norway objected to being relegated to the status of a younger daughter.

It thus came about that a fruitful cause of political trouble with his Norwegian subjects was the suspicion with which Norway regarded any sign of Swedish ascendancy. Their extreme sensitiveness upon the subject of their independence sometimes took shapes which more nearly approached the ridiculous than the sublime ; for example, when they claimed that the royal robes should be made, or all at events be wardrobed, in Norway.

More serious were the Norwegian demands for a separate flag, a separate diplomatic service, a separate order of Norwegian chivalry, and the claim that in Norway Kings Charles XIII and XIV should be styled King Charles I and King Charles II of Norway, and should be hailed in Norway as Kings "of Norway and Sweden" rather than "of Sweden and Norway."³

The demand for a separate diplomatic service had its

¹ Schefer, *Bernadotte Roi*, 225, 226.

² F.O., 73/113.

³ Schefer, 220, 221.

origin in the case of an English merchant who was expelled for alleged smuggling from a Norwegian port. England demanded reparation; and, as the result of negotiation, a substantial sum was paid by way of indemnity. The Storthing complained that Norway had been sacrificed by the ineptitude of the Swedish diplomatists; and the demand for a separate diplomatic service was never afterwards abandoned.

Another serious point of difference between the King and the Norwegian people arose in connection with the National Day of Independence. The day selected by the people was the 17th May, which was the anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution at Eidsvold. The King took offence, preferring the day upon which the King of Sweden had been first proclaimed King of Norway. The dispute simmered for several years, until it reached boiling-point in 1827, when the King made a successful appeal to the Storthing in an address which contained an interesting piece of autobiography.

"In my long career," he said, "there have been three incidents which have impressed me most painfully. The first was when I was forced to draw the sword against France, the country of my birth, under whose banners I won the glory which was the principal motive of the Swedish people in choosing me for their throne. The second was when Norway, misunderstanding my benevolent intentions, forced me to invade her territory with an armed force. The third was in the last year, when I learned that the Storthing had met to celebrate the 17th of May."¹

As the result of this meeting the Storthing, carried away by the King's eloquence, decided to discontinue the annual celebrations on the 17th May. But they had not counted with young Norway. The students insisted on celebrating the obnoxious day. They were dispersed by the police and military with ease and without bloodshed. But the moral victory lay with them. The King

¹ F.O., 73/132, 135.

and the Government dropped their opposition, and the 17th of May has ever since been recognised as the Norwegian Day of Independence.

The King quickly re-established his popularity with the students. Five years afterwards the English Minister tells us that the students of Christiania, on the eve of the King's departure for Stockholm, marched to the palace by torchlight, and, in a song composed for the occasion, expressed their loyalty and devotion.¹

Only once did the King, in his relations with the Norwegian Parliament, drop the buttons off his foils. It was in reference to the question of Norway's share of the Danish National Debt, the amount of which had been fixed by international arrangement. The Storting showed a marked unwillingness to shoulder this burden. They suggested that Sweden should bear a share of it. The King met this demand by asking if Norway was prepared to undertake part of the Swedish National Debt. Finally, losing patience in the face of pressure and of criticism from foreign Powers, he collected a military force and proceeded to hold "manœuvres" in the neighbourhood of Christiania, under the shadow of which the Storting voted the necessary sum.²

If Bernadotte was successful in maintaining and consolidating his Norwegian throne, he did not accomplish his purpose by any servile courtship of popular favour. Love of praise may have been a constant spur to Bernadotte's conduct. It certainly was not the aim or end of his political activity. The story of his relations with the Storting reads like a running fight between the royal and the parliamentary authority; and the student of the period is tempted to wonder how it was possible, under such conditions of continuous strife, for the royal authority to retain its hold on the kingdom.

An English diplomat is found reporting from Christiania that Bernadotte was bullied by the Norwegians and was afraid of them. The explanation of

¹ F.O., 73/146.

² Schefer, 237, 238; F.O., 73/135.

such criticism and of the King's attitude appears to be that the King always "played the game" according to its rules and, when the Storthing had won the game according to the rules, he either surrendered and paid the stakes, or made some bold and happy concession at some well-selected moment.¹

The members of the Storthing reciprocated the respect which Bernadotte displayed towards their Constitution, so that their disputes with the King resembled friendly tilting matches.

The King sometimes reproached his "Norwegian children" for their frugality in the matter of military and naval expenditure. The following is a sample of his rhetorical appeals for money for coast defence: "Tancred de Hauteville conquered Sicily with thirty Normans. If Sicily had been animated by a warlike spirit, if she had possessed a few permanent companies of armed men, she would have avoided that shameful enslavement." The legend of Tancred and his thirty Normans failed to impress the Storthing, which politely rejected the King's proposals.

Norway was markedly affected by the revolutionary spirit which pervaded Europe in 1830. Soon afterwards the peasants, having for the first time succeeded in gaining a virtual predominance in the Storthing, inaugurated a policy which threatened to undermine the whole edifice of government. The King dissolved the Storthing, the members of which, before dispersing, took steps for the impeachment of the Minister who had countersigned the Dissolution Decree. When the Minister had been heavily fined by the Supreme Court the King took a strong course. He insisted upon retaining him in office, and at the same time dismissed a Minister whose conduct in these crises had given him dissatisfaction.

Having held his ground in this constitutional struggle, the King, as was his wont, made a bold attempt to conciliate Norwegian sentiment without weakening the foundations of government. He appointed a Norwegian

¹ Schefer, 188.

to be Governor-General of Norway, and summoned an Extraordinary Storting, at which the pending differences between the Crown and the Parliament were accommodated; and he took up sympathetically two burning Norwegian grievances—the question of the National Flag and the question of Norway's claim to an equal share with Sweden in foreign and diplomatic affairs.

In spite of these quarrels there was among his Norwegian subjects an undercurrent of admiration and gratitude which found expression when the President of the Storting paid a tribute to his paternal solicitude for the welfare and prosperity of his people. "Nations," said the President, "have their childhood, like individuals, and the father of his country, like the head of a family, must help it to reach years of maturity."

Finally, in 1838, after twenty years of tenacious resistance, the King roused enthusiasm by conceding the right to Norwegian merchant ships to carry the Norwegian flag in all waters. In the following year he appointed a joint commission of Swedes and Norwegians to consider and report upon the question of the transaction of the foreign business of the two kingdoms. Thenceforward his relations with his Norwegian subjects were comparatively smooth and cordial, and the affairs of Norway gave him much less trouble than those of the sister kingdom. In 1842 we find the British Minister at Stockholm reporting to our Foreign Office that the King was "extremely popular in Norway."¹

¹ F.O., 73/190.

CHAPTER XLV

THE LAST PHASE

1838-1844

IN spite of the hostility which Bernadotte had to face from time to time from the opposition parties in the Diet and in the press, it became more and more evident towards the end of his reign that he had a strong backing and a large reserve of popularity among his subjects. In 1838, after the occurrence of an *émeute* in Stockholm, he journeyed to Norway, and became the object of demonstrations of loyalty in the country districts of Sweden. It became obvious that, although his critics were able to cause him annoyance, they had not the power, even if they had the will, to shake his throne. And so it came to pass that Bernadotte's last phase became comparatively peaceful and free from care.

It was recognised in both Kingdoms that he was devoted to the welfare of his people, and that he had rendered extraordinary services in reconstructing Swedish prestige and prosperity. These services were quite as conspicuous and remarkable in the departments of Public Health, Local Government and Administration, and Internal Transport as they were in those of military and naval organisation.

In the department of Public Health there was no detail to which Bernadotte did not pay attention. The organisation of the surgical and medical professions, and of pharmaceutical education and appliances; the appointment of competent medical officers in remote districts; the relief of the sick poor, and of deserving domestics; the aiding of poor widows in bringing up

their children; midwifery, vaccination, foundlings' hospitals—nothing seemed to escape him.

He made ceaseless efforts to improve Local Government and Administration. Weights and measures, coinage, mendicity and poor law, insurance, the prevention of fire, agriculture, mines, metals and manufactures, the reclaiming of moorlands, drainage and survey, the clearing of forests from undergrowth, the importation of the best breeds of sheep, and the development of the woollen and linen industries, and of the veterinary profession—these were some of the questions which he took up in a spirit of restless activity, and handled more or less successfully. He sowed many an acorn without any prospect of enjoying the shade of the oak.

His principal obstacles were the conservative habits of the people, which brought him much opposition and many disappointments; but he accomplished much, and sowed many seeds which fructified after he had passed away. One of his successes was the opening of the Gotha Canal, which linked up Stockholm with Gothenburg and connected the Baltic and the Cattegat. Another was his road across a mountainous range between Norway and Sweden which caused people to say that "the Scandinavian Alps had ceased to exist."

In the work of internal reconstruction and development, he accomplished for his Kingdoms some of the results which, by different methods, Queen Victoria and her Ministers afterwards achieved for England. He fortified the national faith in monarchical institutions, won the confidence of his subjects, and guided them along paths of prosperity.¹

It is true that, by prestige and personality, he managed to erect a kind of constitutional despotism; but it was of a strictly paternal kind. He was sincere in his choice, as his royal motto, of the sentiment, "The love of my people shall be my recompense." Racial instinct, unaided by

¹ Cf. Sarrans, ii. chap. xii; Schefer, *Bernadotte Roi*, chap. vi. A French biographer wrote that "although France had much to reproach him with, history will mark him out as one of the best Kings that ever sat on the Swedish throne."

any conscious thought or purpose, guided him along the paths that led to praise and popularity. He was never more gratified than when a voice in a crowd was heard to exclaim: "Look at him! He's our father—God bless him."

He was fond of dwelling on the contrast between the Sweden of 1810, when a Russian statesman had described her as "in the agony of death," and the Sweden of 1840, after he had virtually ruled it for thirty years. He did not exaggerate the contrast. It was summarised as follows in *The Times* of that day:

"The population of the Kingdom was so much increased that the inhabitants of Sweden alone are now equal in number to those of Sweden and Finland before the latter province was torn from the former. The commerce and the manufactures of the country have been doubled, agriculture improved, instruction diffused, the finances raised from a state of great embarrassment to complete prosperity, the national debt almost paid off, a civil and a penal code proposed for promulgation, the great canals which unite the ocean with the Baltic have been completed, and, lastly, the secular hostility of the Swedish and Norwegian nations has given way to mutual confidence, cemented by kindred institutions and the enlightened government of the same sceptre."

Great as were his services to his subjects in home affairs, they were trivial compared with the boons which flowed from his foreign policy. His pacific influence preserved both Sweden and Norway from the horrors of war, and evolved a condition of tranquillity which his successors have been so successful in maintaining that the two phrases, "The Bernadotte Dynasty" and "a State of Peace," seem to have sprung up and to have grown up together like twins.

As a Marshal of the Empire, he had been described as one "who, without liking war, knew how to make it!" He once said that "war had elevated him, and that he had no fear of its dangers, but that he felt it to be the greatest scourge that could be inflicted upon any country,

and that its most brilliant successes could never be commensurate with the evils which it entailed.”¹ The sincerity of these remarks was proved by his resolute resistance to the Swedish “jingo” who advocated the reconquest of Finland. The most enduring monument of his reign has been the peace which he created, continued, and bequeathed.

The Swedes, after twenty-five years’ trial and observation, had learned to appreciate Bernadotte’s sense of public duty, generous humanity of disposition and genuine love of peace. The story of his life shows that in these respects Bernadotte was always the same. Fortune does not change men. It serves to unmask them, or, like a mirror, to reveal them.

Bernadotte was not a hero without fault or blemish as some apologists have painted him; nor a mixture of Iago and Catiline, as the Bonapartist memoir-writers have depicted him. He was a typical Béarnais of Gascony—brave, resourceful, impetuous in action, cautious in affairs. Among his best qualities were his chivalrous consideration and compassion for prisoners and conquered peoples. These were the traits which first recommended him to the Swedes. When they came to know him they found that these traits were not mere gestures. He was always merciful to those who were at his mercy. Few conquerors or Kings who have wielded so much power have misused it so little.

Towards the end of his life Bernadotte seldom appeared in public. Sometimes, after remaining indoors for weeks, the old King would suddenly appear on horseback at a review, or at a fête, or upon the occasion of some emergency, surprising the spectators by his energy, his erect figure and his military bearing. One night, after he had passed the allotted space of life, news of a serious fire in the capital reached his country palace. He started for Stockholm in the middle of the night, arriving at 3.30 a.m., and remained directing the troops and the firemen until the conflagration was got under.² Incidents

¹ F.O., 73/143.

² F.O., 73/161; July 28th, 1835.

of this kind astonished the Diplomatic Corps, and were reported from time to time in their despatches.

On the occasion of his rare appearances there was a revival of popular acclaim for one who had given to his Kingdoms a "thirty years' peace" and had lived to be regarded at home and abroad as pre-eminently "the Grand Old Man" of Scandinavia. His career began to be recognised as "one of the most extraordinary in the whole compass of ancient and modern history."¹ There was a reaction in his favour and an outburst of hero-worship.

The year 1843—the eightieth year of his life, and the twenty-fifth of his reign—was made the occasion of a series of civic fêtes and demonstrations in his honour.² Stockholm overwhelmed him with lively enthusiasm, and he compared himself to "an affectionate father touched by the devotion of his children." It was a last mark of favour from the goddess Fortune. The old King was permitted to see a gleam of his old popularity illumining the lengthening shadows before he passed away.

There is nothing gained by dwelling upon the death of a brave old man. When the drama is finished it is better to drop the curtain abruptly than to let it sag. It was in the autumn of 1843 that his health began to fail. In January 1844, when preparations were being made for the celebration of his eightieth birthday, his last illness attacked him. In February the Crown Prince assumed the regency, and on the 8th of March the King breathed his last. Then, with every mark of a nation's homage, Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, cadet of Gascony and soldier of fortune, was laid to rest beside Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII in the tomb of the Vasas.

¹ *Foreign Quarterly*, vol. xxv (1840).

² F.O., 73/194, 199.



2



3



1



7



6



4



5

Jean Baptiste Bernadette 1763-1844

2. General in the Revolutionary Army 3. Ambassador under the Directory
1. Soldier of King Louis XVI 7. Deathmask 6. King of Sweden & Norway
4. Marshal & Prince of the Empire 5. Crown Prince of Sweden

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

THE author of this book originally took up the subject as a character study. There had been no previous biography of Bernadotte in the English language. The first half of his career had not been adequately investigated or dealt with in any language. Where he has broken fresh ground, the author has given references to the sources of information in footnotes.

A distorted portrait of Bernadotte was presented by the Napoleonic memoir-writers, such as Marbot, de Ségur, Savary and others, who naturally became resentful when the ex-marshal of France, having become a Swede, took up arms against Napoleon and against France. Napoleon censored the French Press against Bernadotte, thus preventing the French people from becoming aware that the Swedish Crown Prince had striven to preserve peace between Sweden and France, and that Napoleon's tyrannical attitude had left him no alternative except to take the field, unless he was to sacrifice his adopted country and his dynasty. In recent years an increasing number of Frenchmen seem to have shown a disposition to lay aside their natural resentment against Bernadotte, and to take a legitimate pride in his extraordinary career.

Two French biographies appeared shortly after Bernadotte's death, one by Sarrans in 1845, and the other by Touchard Lafosse in 1858. Sarrans was very hostile to Bernadotte wherever his relations with France or Napoleon were under discussion. In other respects he strove to be just and impartial. Touchard Lafosse gained his information from Bernadotte's entourage. As a result, he is generally accurate in his facts and

dates. But he has been described—not unjustly—as an apologist. He also had the defect of being dull. By casting a serious cloak over Bernadotte's Gascon foibles and extravagances of thought and language, he transformed a very interesting personality into an almost impossible hero. The author has used Touchard Lafosse when it has been material to ascertain Bernadotte's point of view.

Four French writers of distinction have, in the course of the last half-century, dealt with certain special aspects of Bernadotte's career. M. Frédéric Masson in *Les Diplomates de la Révolution* (1882), and M. A. Dry in *Soldats Ambassadeurs sous le Directoire* (1906) have described the Viennese Ambassadorship. These monographs have been used as the foundation of Chapter VIII of this book.

M. Léonce Pingaud, in *Bernadotte, Bonaparte et les Bourbons* (1901), gave undue weight to the jaundiced testimony of the Bonapartist scribes and of the French diplomats in Sweden whose duty and delight it was to regale the Bourbon Kings of France by depreciating and caricaturing the *parvenu* King of Sweden. The chivalrous Academician, Count E. M. de Vogüé, observed that M. Pingaud's picture might be considered "very severe," and added that the author sees the dark side of his hero "who is in turn or both at once Iago and Scapin"; and Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, while doing justice to the "copious knowledge" and the "literary distinction" of M. Pingaud's book, has remarked that "perhaps he hardly makes sufficient allowance for the extreme difficulty of the situation" in which Bernadotte was placed. M. Pingaud fully recognised Bernadotte's personal valour, his military talents, his humanity, and his gift for good government. But when he tried to be impartial between Bernadotte upon the one side and France on the other, he displays what is known as "the impartiality of the hanging Judge." But the book is an honest and an interesting one, and the author is a fine writer. M. Christian Schefer's *Bernadotte Roi* gives a vivid and dis-

passionate portrait of Bernadotte as King. His conclusions have been confirmed by the present author's investigations.

Use has been made of the historical works of Vandal, Sorel, Aulard, Madelin, Geffroy, and of the *Cambridge Modern History*; of the French contemporary journals, such as *Le Moniteur*, *Le Journal des Débats*, *La Clef du Cabinet*, *La Gazette de France*, etc.; of military histories such as those of Jomini, and of *Victoires, Conquêtes, etc., des Français*; of the memoirs and correspondence of Bernadotte's contemporaries and comrades-in-arms—Napoleon, Alexander I, the Archduke Charles, Joachim Murat, Lord Castlereagh, Generals Jourdan, Masséna, Kléber, Marceau, Desaix, Ney, Marmont, Lefèbvre, Lannes, Rapp, Lahure, Sarrazin, Rochechouart; and of civilians such as Thibaudeau, Roëderer, Barras, Gohier, Lucien and Joseph Bonaparte; of the military historians of the various wars and campaigns; Chuquet and Dupuis for the wars of the Revolution; Colin and Alombert for the campaign of Austerlitz in 1805; Foucart, Bonnal, Henry Houssaye, Lieut.-Col. Titeux, and the English military writers, Lorraine Petre and Colonel Maude, for the campaign of Jena in 1806; General Mathieu Dumas, Lorraine Petre and General Bennigsen for the campaign of Poland in 1807; Boppé for the incident of the Spanish army in Denmark in 1808; Pelet and Lejeune for the campaign of Wagram; Sir Archibald Alison and Sir Charles Stewart for the War of Liberation; and of the lives of the marshals of Napoleon which have been written by the French General Zurlinden and by Mr. R. B. Dunn-Pattison.

An important modern contribution to the subject is the monograph, *Le Maréchal Bernadotte et les Manœuvres d'Iéna*, par Lieut.-Col. Titeux, a French staff officer (from documents in the war archives of France, etc.) published in the *Revue Napoléonienne*, Tome IV, April–September 1903, pp. 69–152. Colonel Titeux completely exonerates Bernadotte from the charges of disobedience and jealousy which Napoleon made against him in order

to cover up his own mistakes in reference to the manœuvres of Jena. This exculpation had been to some extent foreshadowed and anticipated by English and American writers on the subject like Colonel Maude, C.B., and W. M. Sloane.

The Swedish archives contain several memoranda of an autobiographical or quasi-official character, which came from the papers of Count Gustave Löwenhjelm, who was an eminent Swedish statesman. They proceed largely from Bernadotte himself or his entourage and represent his or their version of certain events in which he played a part. They are not to be rejected on that account ; and they have been utilised in the appendix to Sir Walter Scott's *Life of Napoleon*, and in the *Mémoires* of Bourrienne, a book which has to be read with caution and subject to the corrective of *Bourrienne et ses erreurs*. The principal of these memoranda is known as *Note Historique sur le 18^e Brumaire*. In using these memoranda the author has compared them with other authorities and checked them by reference to other sources of information.

Ignorance of the Swedish language has hampered the author in his use of Swedish authorities. He has dived into them with the help of translators or translations ; but it has been impossible for him to do justice to them. He has made an exhaustive examination of the unpublished archives of the English Foreign Office, in so far as they allude to Bernadotte personally ; and these allusions are referred to in the notes under the letters F.O. Use has also been made of the collection of Swedish despatches published under the title of *Historiska Handlingar*, which are referred to in the notes under the letters H.H.

A great deal of additional information about Bernadotte is to be found in the Author's three previous volumes on the subject :

Bernadotte, the First Phase (1763-99), John Murray, 1914.

Bernadotte and Napoleon (1799-1810), John Murray,
1921.

Bernadotte, Prince and King (1810-44), John Murray,
1925.

These three books comprise appendices and correspondence for which space could not be found in a single volume.

INDEX

- Abo, conference between Bernadotte and the Czar at, 267-271
- Abrantès. See Junot
- Adlercreutz, General, Swedish statesman, 241, 243
- Ajaccio, Bernadotte stationed at, 6
- Alexander I, Emperor of Russia, sends Colonel Czernitchef to Bernadotte and holds a conference with him at Abo in 1812, 260-272; sends Count Pozzo di Borgo to Bernadotte in 1813, 278-280; meets Bernadotte before the opening of the campaign of 1813 at Trachenberg, 283, 284; sends the Count de Rochechouart to Bernadotte in order to induce him to cross the Elbe, 296; the success of his mission, 296-300; congratulates Bernadotte after the battle of Leipsic, 302; puts him forward for throne of France, 309, 310; keeps faith with him about Norway, *ib.*; supports his dynasty and discourages the intrigues of the Vasas, 318, 322
- Alison, Sir Archibald, cited, 42, 286, 292, 293
- Allaux, Ricard d', 12
- Alquier, Baron, French Minister at Stockholm, 258, 263, 264
- Anspach, violation of its neutrality by Bernadotte, 174; transferred from Prussia to Bavaria, 175; Bernadotte becomes governor of, 180; rumour that he was to become Prince of, 186; the starting-point of the campaign of 1806, 185; Bernadotte's success in governing, 180, 329
- Arfedson, Madame, Lady of the Swedish Court, her impressions of Bernadotte's *début* as Crown Prince, 252, 253
- Arkansas, 150n
- Armfeldt, Count, Finnish nobleman, impressions of Bernadotte as Crown Prince, 255, 256
- Auerstadt, battle of, 187, 188
- Augereau, General, afterwards Marshal and Duke of Castiglione, one of the generals of the Army of Italy in 1797, 43n; his jealousy of the superior qualities of Bernadotte's troops, *ib.* 49; his ridiculous order cancelled by Napoleon, *ib.*; contrasted with Bernadotte, 54; carried out the *coup d'état* of Fructidor, 55-57; supports Bernadotte in opposing the *coup d'état* of Brumaire, 114, 115; other references to, 59, 64, 122
- Augustenburg, Duke of, one of the candidates for the Swedish succession, 234, 242
- Austerlitz, battle of, 176-179
- Barbaroux, his prediction about Bernadotte, 12
- Barras, one of the original Directors of France, and the only one who retained office throughout the continuance of the Directory, gets into power as a Director of France after the fall of Robespierre, 28; compares Bernadotte to Xenophon, 33; organises the *coup d'état* of Fructidor with the help of Napoleon, 52, 53; receives Bernadotte in audience, and invites him to co-operate in the *coup d'état*, 56, 57; carries out the *coup d'état*, 57, 58; offers Bernadotte four commands-in-chief, the Army of the South, the Army of the Rhine, the Ionian Islands, and the Army of Italy, 58, 60, 69, 70; defends Bernadotte's conduct as Ambassador against Napoleon, 83; praises Bernadotte for trying to rescue Colonel d'Ambert, 85; carries out the *coup d'état* of the

30th Prairial, asks Bernadotte to co-operate, 95, 96; selects Bernadotte for the Ministry of War, and afterwards helps Sieyès to remove him, 97, 100; his praise of Bernadotte, 106-107; is driven from public life by Napoleon's *coup d'état* of Brumaire, 109, 117

Bavaria, 171-179, 331

Beauharnais, Eugène de, Napoleon's stepson, 175, 233, 237, 331

Bernadotte, M. Henri, Bernadotte's father, 3, 4, 5

Bernadotte, Madame Henri, Bernadotte's mother, 3, 4, 5, 15, 40, 214

Bernadotte, Baron Jean, Bernadotte's elder brother, 4, 10, 15, 40, 214, 248

Bernadotte, Jean Baptiste, his Gascon raciality, xi; his birth, parentage and boyhood, 3, 4; his enlistment, 5, 6; serves in the ranks in Corsica and at Grenoble, 6-10; first meeting with Désirée Clary, 10-11; his adventures in Marseilles at the outbreak of the French Revolution, 11-14; at Lambesc and the Isle de Rhé, 14; after eleven years in the ranks obtains a commission as lieutenant, 15; his bitter experience of the exclusiveness of the *ancien régime* and its influence upon his political outlook, 5, 8, 15; he serves as an officer in the Revolutionary Army, 16; his narrow escape from the guillotine, 17; his success in managing undisciplined troops, 18, 21; his friendship with Generals Kléber and Marceau, 20; his relations with the notorious St. Just, 21; his refusal of an offer of promotion to the rank of general, 22; distinguishes himself at the battles of Fleurus and the Roer, and at the siege of Maestricht, 23; he becomes a notable vanguard and rear-guard leader in the "Army of Sambre and Meuse," his gasconades and his resourcefulness, 29-30; gains great distinction at the battle of Teining,

and in the retreat which followed, 30-33; Barras compares him to Xenophon, 33; receives extraordinary praise from General Kléber, 34; present at Marceau's death, 35; humanity to prisoners, 35; respect for enemy's property, 36; is indignant at a libel in the Paris press, and is dissuaded from retiring by General Kléber, 37-39; becomes Governor of Coblenz, 39; is sent to reinforce Napoleon Bonaparte in Italy, 41; first meeting with Napoleon, 44-45; their impressions of each other, 49; his quarrel with General Berthier and its consequences, 43-44; distinguishes himself at the crossing of the Tagliamento and the storming of Gradisca, 46-48; jealousies and disputes between his soldiers and the troops of the Army of Italy, 43, 44, 49; impressions of him recorded by Generals Desaix, Thiébault, Caffarelli, Lahure and by others, 49-50; after the Armistice of Leoben becomes Governor of Friuli with headquarters at Udine, 50-51; his first plunge into politics, he acts with moderation and independence, 52-59; Napoleon's tribute to him, 56; received in audience by the Directory, 57; refrains from taking part in the *coup d'état* of Fructidor, 57; refuses two commands-in-chief, becomes a possible Minister of War, 58-60; interesting conversation with Napoleon at Passariano, 63-65; conversation with the future Empress Josephine, 56; first rift with Napoleon, asks for his retirement or for a distant employment, 67-69; is appointed to the command of the Ionian Islands, 69; suddenly appointed commander-in-chief of the Army of Italy in succession to Napoleon, 70; Napoleon gets the appointment cancelled, and gets him made Ambassador at Vienna, 71; correspondence with Talleyrand, 72; goes to

Vienna as Ambassador, 74 ; Bernadotte's relations with the Emperor of Austria, the Empress, the Foreign Minister, the Archduke Charles, the Marquis de Béthisy, and with Beethoven, 75-78 ; displays a tricolour flag over the Embassy, 79 ; a mob pulls down the flag and storms the Embassy, 80 ; Bernadotte demands his passports and leaves Vienna, 81-82 ; returns to Paris immediately after Napoleon's departure for Egypt, refuses another ambassadorship and a command-in-chief, 83 ; tries to rescue his former colonel, Marquis d'Ambert, from the scaffold, 84-85 ; marries Désirée Clary, 85-89 ; conciliates Hesse-Darmstadt, 90 ; proposes an expedition for the relief of Napoleon, 91 ; is offered the command of the Army of Italy, refuses when his conditions are not complied with, 92 ; siege of Phillippsburg with a phantom army, 93-94 ; refuses to execute the *coup d'état* of Prairial, 95-96 ; is appointed Minister of War, 97 ; deals with the problems of conscription and finance, 98-99 ; grapples with a state of war in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland, 100-101 ; is approached by the Royalists, the Bonapartists, and the Jacobins and rejects their proposals, 102, 103 ; Sieyès forces his resignation, 104-105 ; he refuses a command-in-chief and demands his retirement, 105 ; his defence of his ministry, 106, 107 ; return of Napoleon from Egypt, 108 ; Bernadotte is the "obstacle man" of the *coup d'état* of the 18th Brumaire but refuses to take an initiative, 109-115 ; when Napoleon's *coup d'état* succeeds, Bernadotte goes into hiding as a fugitive accompanied by his wife, who disguises herself as a boy, 117-118 ; is "absorbed" by Napoleon, who makes him a Councillor of State, 122 ; is offered the post of Lieutenant of the First Con-

sul, but prefers the command of the Army of the West, 125 ; disagreeable nature of the post, 126 ; during the Marengo campaign Napoleon commits to him "the fate of the Republic," 127 ; he is appointed to the command of an army for a second campaign in Italy, but Murat protests and the appointment is cancelled, 128 ; aspires to command armies against England or St. Domingo, 128-129 ; Napoleon hints that he will have him shot, 129 ; refuses the ambassadorship to Constantinople and the command in Guadeloupe, 130 ; his home and social life in 1801, 131-139 ; his friendships with Madame de Staël and with Madame Récamier, 133, 136 ; his name crops up in connection with the Ceracchi conspiracy and the affair of the infernal machine, 140, 141 ; Napoleon compares him to Marc Antony, 141 ; is the pivot of the so-called "Conspiracy of Paris," 142, 143 ; is wrongly suspected of complicity in the conspiracy of Donnadieu and is put under surveillance by General Davout, 144, 145 ; is gravely suspected of complicity in the Plot of the Placards, 146-147 ; Napoleon says that he deserves to be shot, 148 ; is offered the Governorship of Louisiana, but refuses it when his conditions are not complied with, 149-150 ; accepts the Ambassadorship to U.S.A., but throws it up and returns to Paris, 151-152 ; strange prophecy of a Parisian fortune-teller, 162 ; his relations with General Moreau, they drift apart politically, 155 ; despairs of the Republic and accepts Napoleon's invitation to co-operate in the establishment of the Empire, 156 ; is created a marshal and carries out his promise of co-operation, but confides his chagrin and disappointment to Lucien Bonaparte, 156-160 ; becomes Governor of Hanover, 163 ; is

present at the coronation of Napoleon, 164; governs Hanover with skill and clemency, 164-170; commands a wing of the Grand Army in the campaign of Austerlitz and captures Munich, 171-176; commands one of the five army corps at Austerlitz, 176-179; is appointed Governor of Anspach, 180, 188; is created Prince of Ponte Corvo, 181-184; his absence from the battle of Jena due to the negligence of the staff and to the difficulties of his march, 185, 186; in order to cover up a mistake of Napoleon's he is falsely accused of disobedience to an order which he never received, 187-191; takes part in "the great pursuit" of the Prussians, 192-197; his storming of Halle, 192, 193; his capture of Lübeck, 197-199; his considerate treatment of Count Mörner and the Swedish prisoners at Lübeck, 197, 198; Napoleon praises his operations, 198-200; he commands the left wing in the campaign of Poland, 201-206; distinguishes himself at Mohrungen, 204; is wounded at Spanden, 205; the Emperor is touched, 206; becomes Governor of the Hanseatic towns and occupies Denmark, 207; revolt and escape of his Spanish contingent, 208-209; rumour that he is to be King of Denmark, 209; Napoleon contemplates making him King of Spain in certain contingencies, and speaks openly of adopting him and making him his own successor, 210; his success in governing the Hanseatic towns, 211, 212; his feud with Marshal Davout, 213; his mother's death, 214; he is appointed to command a Saxon corps in the campaign of Wagram, 215; he complains of systematic persecution by his enemies and protests in vain against having to command an inefficient corps of foreigners, 216-218; the Saxons meet with

misfortune and give way at Wagram, 219-220; Bernadotte behaves with gallantry, 220; his gasconading order of the day after Wagram, 221; Napoleon's anger, 222; he leaves the army under a cloud, 222; the landing of an English army on the island of Walcheren, 224; he offers his sword and is appointed commander-in-chief of the Army of Antwerp, 224; he acts energetically, 225; is surrounded by spies, 226; and is reproached by Napoleon for listening to the intriguers of Paris, 227; he is ordered to Ponte Corvo but refuses to go, 228; is offered the command of the French Army in Catalonia, but refuses it, is summoned to Vienna and is appointed Governor of Rome with two millions for his expenses, but evades acceptance of the offer, 229; sudden death of the Crown Prince of Sweden, 233; how he became a candidate for the vacant succession, 234-236; Napoleon looks for other French candidates, but none are acceptable to Sweden, 237; the election at Örebro, 237-244; he is unanimously elected Crown Prince of Sweden by the four houses of the Swedish Diet, 244; Napoleon requires him to undertake never to bear arms against France, but he refuses to agree to any condition of vassalage, 245-246; Napoleon withdraws the condition, 246; his farewell to France, 247-249; his *début* in Sweden, 250-256; he refuses to involve Sweden in war with Russia for the recovery of Finland, and pins his destiny to the union of Norway to Sweden, 257-259; Napoleon insists upon Sweden declaring war against England and closing her ports to English commerce, 259, 260; the war becomes farcical, 260; he receives an emissary from the Czar, 260-262; Désirée's visit to Stockholm, 262; he tries to preserve neutrality, 264; Napo-

leon invades Swedish Pomerania, 265; he is forced to break with Napoleon and to turn to Russia and England, 266; the conference between the Crown Prince and the Czar at Abo, 267, 268; the Czar encourages Bernadotte to aspire to the throne of France, 269; the good understanding between the Czar and Bernadotte, 269-272; receives Madame de Staël at Stockholm, 273; makes a treaty with England, 275, 276; Bernadotte enters upon the War of Liberation, 277-289; his interview with Count Pozzo di Borgo, 279; his disappointments and apprehensions, 280, 281; the conference with the allied sovereigns at Trachenberg, he dictates the plan of campaign, 292, 293; his relations with Sir Charles Stewart, with General Moreau, and with the Duke of Cumberland, 285-291; the defence of Berlin, 291; Bernadotte defeats Marshal Oudinot at Grossbeeren, and Marshal Ney at Dennewitz, 292, 293; the mission of Count de Rochecouart, 295-299; Bernadotte crosses the Elbe and strikes the decisive blow at the battle of Leipsic, 300-303; the defeat of Napoleon, 303; Bernadotte invades Denmark, and obtains the cession of Norway by the Treaty of Kiel, 304; Bernadotte shrinks from joining in the invasion of France, his dilemma and his wavering attitude, 305; he proceeds to Liége, where he is approached by emissaries from Napoleon and from the Bourbons, 306-307; he proceeds to Paris in order to ensure the execution of the Treaty of Kiel, 308; his delicate position towards the allies and towards his former fellow-countrymen, 309-312; he returns to Sweden, 313; carries out the union of Norway to Sweden, 314-315; Swedish enthusiasm for him, 316-318; he hears of Napoleon's return from Elba, his attitude

during and after the Hundred Days, 318, 329; the Vasas' last gasp, 322; the death of King Charles XIII, 325; Bernadotte's accession and coronation, 325-329; the King and Queen at home, 330-336; the prisoner of St. Helena, 337-343; the King's relations with France, 344-349; and with England, 350-356; how the King established his dynasty in Sweden, 357-365; and in Norway, 366-371; the last phase, 372-376

Bernadotte, Marie, Bernadotte's sister, 4, 15, 40

Berthier, General, afterwards Marshal and Prince of Neuchâtel, Napoleon's chief of the staff, first meeting and quarrel with Bernadotte leads to an estrangement between them, 43, 44, 47; is appointed to command the Army of Italy instead of Bernadotte, 70; one of the military hierarchy with Murat and Bernadotte in 1804, 164; is created Prince of Neuchâtel and Valengin, 181, 183; his "explicable negligence" towards Bernadotte before the battle of Jena, 186; helps Napoleon to cover up his mistake by falsely accusing Bernadotte of disobedience, 187-189; Bernadotte's complaints and distrust of him, 201, 202; he conveys Napoleon's sympathy when Bernadotte is wounded, 206; Bernadotte complains that he is paralysed by a "hidden force," his hatred of Bernadotte, 215, 217; he takes away Bernadotte's reserve at a critical moment, Bernadotte's complaint, 219; favoured by Napoleon for the Swedish succession, 257, 310

Béthisy, M. de, one of Bernadotte's colonels when he was in the ranks, 7n, 77, 78

Bloomfield, General Lord, British Minister in Sweden, 354, 355

Bonaparte. See Napoleon, Joseph, Lucien, Jerome, Eliza, Caroline, Pauline

Bonde, Count, Swedish nobleman, 328

- Borgo. See Pozzo di Borgo
 Boudet, General, 101
 Bournonville, General, 65
 Bourrienne, Napoleon's private secretary, 110, 111, 112, 116, 126, 147; French minister at Hamburg, 212, 213; his *Mémoires*, 380
 Brahé, Count, Swedish nobleman who was a friend and confidant of Bernadotte's, 311, 341
 Bronté, the Duchy of, 181
 Brumaire, the *coup d'état* of, 108-118
 Brune, General, afterwards Marshal, 101, 102, 126
 Burke, Edmund, 24
- Cadoudal, Georges, 126
 Caffarelli, General, 49
Camarade de Lit, Le, French vaudeville satirising Bernadotte, 346-348
 Campbell, Sir Neil, 272
 Campo Formio, the Treaty of, 63, 66
 Camps, Colonel, Gascon foster-brother of Bernadotte, 3, 262
 Canning, George, 207
 Carlyle, 7, 8
 Caroline Bonaparte, Madame Murat, Queen of Naples, 6, 89, 99, 123, 145
 Castaing, 7
 Castlereagh, Lord, English Foreign Secretary, concludes a Treaty of Alliance with Sweden in 1812, his tribute to Bernadotte, 276; praises Bernadotte to Madame de Staël, 284; his correspondence about Bernadotte with Sir Charles Stewart, 285, 286; says in Parliament that Bernadotte had scrupulously observed his engagements, 302; carries out England's engagements to Bernadotte, 309
 Catalonia, 228
 Catinat, Marshal, Bernadotte influenced by reading his life, 7
 Ceracchi Conspiracy, the, 140, 141
 Charles, Austrian Archduke and commander-in-chief, 30, 49, 78
 Charles XIII, elected King of Sweden after the dethronement of Gustavus IV, 233; is opposed to Bernadotte's election as Crown Prince, but yields to advice, 242-245; becomes Bernadotte's adoptive father, 245, 318; his affection for Bernadotte, and Bernadotte's filial attentions and loyalty to him, 250-255, 259-261, 277, 315; his death, 325
 Charles XIV of Sweden. See Bernadotte
 Charlotte, Queen-Dowager of Sweden, 255
 Chateaubriand, 109, 309
 Clarke, General, Minister of War, afterwards Duc de Feltre, 222, 226, 228
 Clary family, the, 10, 86, 199
 Coblenz, 40
 Cologne, 23, 305
 Colorado, 150n
 Constant, Benjamin, French writer and politician, friend of Madame de Staël and of Bernadotte, 60, 143
 Constantinople, Ambassadorship to, offered to Bernadotte, 130
 Copenhagen, 207
 Corsica, Bernadotte in the garrison of, 6
 Cortés, Bernadotte influenced by reading the life of, 7
Coup d'état of the 18th Fructidor, 57; of the 30th Prairial, 96; of the 18th Brumaire, 114-118
 Creuznach, 30
 Cuddalore, 165
 Custine, General, guillotined, 17, 38
 Cyrano de Bergerac, xi, 4
- Danton, 16
 Dantzic, the Duchess of. See "Sans-Gêne, Madame"
 D'Artagnan, xi, 3, 4, 5, 6
 Davout, Marshal, Duke of Auerstadt and Prince of Eckmühl, personal enemy of Bernadotte, a fine general, but a servile instrument of Napoleon's, chief of Napoleon's military police, 142; suspects Bernadotte of treason and places spies upon his house, 144; becomes his life-long enemy, *ib.*; represents being subordinated to Bernadotte at Munich, 174; commands a corps at Austerlitz, 176; described by a German at a ball at Anspach, 180; represents Bernadotte's elevation to

- princely rank, 184; wins a great victory at Auerstadt, 187; accuses Bernadotte of not supporting him, Napoleon uses the incident to screen himself, 189; mentioned with Bernadotte for the throne of Poland, 201; opens Bernadotte's letters in 1808, 212; Bernadotte threatens to horsewhip him; he says that Bernadotte deserved hanging, 213; put forward for the throne of Sweden, but rejected by the Swedes, 237; invades Swedish Pomerania, 265; threatens Bernadotte's rear in the War of Liberation, 285
- "Day of the Tiles, the," 10
- D'Enghien, Duke, 102, 112
- Denmark, Bernadotte's strange remark about, 198; occupied by Bernadotte, 207-209; King of Denmark is a candidate for the Swedish succession, 234-235; Bernadotte resolves to acquire Norway from, 258, 278, 281, 282, 289; King of Denmark cedes Norway to the King of Sweden by the Treaty of Kiel, 304; Norway united to Sweden, 313-315; other references to, 35, 369
- Desaix, General, his impressions of Bernadotte in 1797, 50
- Désirée Clary, wife of Bernadotte, first meeting with Bernadotte when a child, 10, 11; her next meeting with Bernadotte, 86; her girlhood and her suitors, 86, 87; her marriage to Bernadotte, 88, 89, 91, 103, 108; her *déjeuner* to Napoleon before Brumaire, 111; after Brumaire she flies disguised as a boy and conceals herself near the Forest of Senart, 118; domestic life and correspondence with Bernadotte, 131-133; Napoleon uses her as an involuntary spy on her husband, 155; joins Bernadotte when he is wounded at Spanden, 205, 233, 240, 249; visits Sweden, 262; her advice to her husband in 1813, 280; Queen of Sweden, 330-332, 334, 336
- Donnadieu, Colonel, conspiracy of, in 1802, 144
- Drouet, General, serves under Bernadotte in Poland in 1807, 203; Bernadotte, as King of Sweden, gives his son a commission in the Swedish Army, 321
- Dubois, Crancé, 106
- Ducos, Roger, 96, 105, 116
- Dumas, Alexandre, 5, 6
- Dupas, General, Bernadotte's deputy in the government of the Hanseatic towns, 207, 211
- Duphot, General, 87
- Dupont, General, serves under Bernadotte at Halle and Mohrungen, 193, 203, 204
- Duroc, General, 63
- Eidsvold, Convention of, 313, 314, 368
- Elba, Napoleon's escape from, and the impression which it made upon Bernadotte, 319
- Elisée, Doctor, 10
- Eliza Bonaparte, Grand Duchess of Lucca, 6, 89, 135, 181
- Engeström, Count d', Swedish statesman, 359
- England, until he is elected Crown Prince of Sweden, Bernadotte is an *ex-officio* enemy of, references to during the Revolutionary period, 23, 54, 82; during the Consulate, 125, 128, 136, 152, 154, 160; during the Empire, 163, 169, 170, 207, 224, 225; after his election as Crown Prince of Sweden he becomes the firm friend and ally of England, 259, 260, 265, 275, 276, 280-288, 290, 291, 300, 304, 309, 313; his relations with England as King of Sweden, 350-356
- Eylau, 204
- Fabert, Marshal, Bernadotte influenced by reading his life, 7
- Fersen, Count, 319
- Fezensac, Duc de, meets Bernadotte in Poland in 1807, his impressions, 202
- Finland, 257-259, 263, 267
- Fisher, Right Honourable H. A. L., 378
- Fitzgerald, Lord Edward, 355
- Fleurus, battle of, 22, 23, 27
- Fontenoy, 165
- Fouché, Duke of Otranto, Napo-

- leon's Minister of Police, 28, 117, 142; designates Bernadotte as Napoleon's successor in France, 218, 224-228; Bernadotte as King of Sweden makes his son Chamberlain of his Court, 321
- Fournier, 240
- France, Bernadotte's career as a Frenchman, 3-244; he ceases to be a Frenchman and becomes a Swede, 245; he strives to keep on good terms with France without ruining Sweden, 257-264; Napoleon's act of war against Sweden forces him to become the ally of Russia and England against France, 266-277; he fights against France in the War of Liberation and turns the scale against Napoleon, 278-303; his prospects of the French throne, 269, 275, 281, 297, 307, 309, 310; his last farewell to France, 312; his attitude at the Congress of Vienna, the Hundred Days, and the second Restoration, 318-321; the prisoner of St. Helena, 337-343; his relations with France as King of Sweden, 344-349; Frenchmen feel resentment towards him, but take pride in his great qualities, 349, 377
- Francis I, Austrian Emperor, 75-81, 271, 283-284, 310, 311
- Franzenberg, Doctor, his mission to Bernadotte in 1814, 307
- Friedland, 207
- Friuli, 50, 51, 67, 68
- Geffroy, M., French historical writer, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1855-1856, 247n
- Geijer, Professor, of Upsala University, 316
- Genlis, the Comtesse de, impressions of Bernadotte, 139
- Gérard, Captain, Bernadotte's A.D.C., afterwards general, and marshal, 72, 81, 151-153, 179, 213, 349
- Goguet, General, 19
- Gohier, French judge, who became a Director of the Republic, his relations with Bernadotte, 96, 97, 105, 106, 123
- Gothland, Duchess of. See Désirée
- Gradisca, stormed by Bernadotte in the campaign of Italy in 1797, 47
- Grenoble, 9-10
- Grossbeeren, Bernadotte defeats Marshal Oudinot at the battle of, 292
- Grouchy, General, 194
- Guadeloupe, 130, 149, 276, 309, 315, 319, 324
- Guérin, celebrated French artist, 110
- Gustavus IV, King of Sweden, dethroned in 1809, 164, 233, 236, 255, 256, 316; sends congratulations to Bernadotte on his accession to the Swedish throne, 328
- Gustavus Vasa, Prince, son of Gustavus IV, his pretensions to the Swedish throne, 236, 298, 322
- Halle, stormed by Bernadotte in 1806, 193
- Hamburg, 207, 211-213, 239, 240, 243, 249
- Hanover, governed by Bernadotte in 1805-1806, revisited in 1813, 163-170, 204, 215, 295, 304, 312, 329
- Hanseatic towns, Bernadotte's government of, 211-213, 329
- Hedeman, Colonel, arrest of, at Hanover, and Bernadotte's clemency towards, 166
- Henri IV [1553-1610], born at Pau, King of France, a typical Gascon of Béarn, his character and career were the objects of Bernadotte's passionate admiration, xi, 4, 5, 98, 166, 236, 275, 306, 307, 342, 349
- Hesse-Cassel, Bernadotte in, 171
- Hesse-Darmstadt, Bernadotte in, 90
- Hierta, Swedish opposition journalist, his relations with Bernadotte when King of Sweden, 361, 362
- Hoche, General, 52, 59, 64
- Holland, 101, 102, 224-226, 311
- Hortense de Beauharnais, Queen of Holland, meets Bernadotte in Paris in 1814, 311

- Houchard, General, guillotined, 17, 38
 Howard de Walden, Lord, English diplomat in Sweden, 354
 Hugo, Victor, 321
- Ionian Islands, the, 69
 Ireland, 10, 170, 355
 Isonzo, the river, 46, 47
 Italy, the Army of, 41-51, 69, 70, 91, 92
- Jacobins, the so-called, 96, 104, 112, 247
 Jena, Bernadotte's absence from the battle of, exposes him to false accusations, 185-191
 Jerome Bonaparte, King of Westphalia, brother of Napoleon, 6, 206
 Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon's elder brother and Bernadotte's brother-in-law, who became King of Naples and Sicily, 181; King of Spain, 208-210; mentioned, 6, 86, 87, 88, 91, 103, 110, 111, 116, 122, 127-131, 135, 149, 152, 181, 183, 208, 209, 210, 245, 307, 344, 345
 Josephine, Empress, 17n, 66, 311
 Joubert, General, brilliant general, killed at Novi, 45, 65, 95, 96, 100, 102
 Jourdan, General, commander-in-chief of the Army of Sambre and Meuse, afterwards marshal, 20, 27, 93, 94, 114, 115, 117, 122
 Julian, agent of Fouché, his mission to Bernadotte in 1809, 225, 226
 Julie Clary, sister of Désirée Clary, wife of Joseph Bonaparte, became Queen of Naples and of Spain, 86, 91, 131, 147, 233, 249, 277, 321, 330, 331
 Junot, General, Duke of Abrantès, aide-de-camp to Napoleon, 87, 136, 175, 233
 Junot, Madame, Duchess d'Abrantès, 88, 311
- Kiel, the Treaty of, 304, 313
 Kléber, General, intimate friend of Bernadotte's, his comrade-in-arms in the campaign of 1794, 1795, and 1796, 20-23, 27-34, 37-39; they meet in Paris in 1797, 60, 65; his death, 108n
- Lafayette, Marquis de, friend of Bernadotte's, 10, 288, 311, 320
 Lafosse, Touchard, biographer of Bernadotte, criticised, 378
 Lang, Ritter von, German official, impressions of Bernadotte in Anspach, 180, 181
 Lannes, Marshal, afterwards Duc de Montebello, a friend of Bernadotte's, 66, 141, 206, 176
 Lavalette, Napoleon's aide-de-camp, 55, 62
 Lebrun, Colonel, an aide-de-camp of Bernadotte's, 218
 Lecamus, favourite of Jerome Bonaparte, 206
 Leclerc, General, 91, 112, 116, 129
 Lefèbvre, General, afterwards marshal, and Duke of Dantzic, a friend of Bernadotte's, 14n, 15n, 27, 60, 180, 183, 184, 193
 Lefèbvre, Madame. See "Sans-Gêne, Madame"
 Leipsic, the battle of, 301-303
 Leuchtenberg, Princess Josephine of, marries Prince Oscar of Sweden, 331
 Liberation, the War of, 278-308
 Liège, 306, 307
 Lind, Jenny, Court Singer to Bernadotte, when King of Sweden, 333
 Lindeberg, Captain, Swedish political writer, the case of, 362
 Londonderry, 3rd Marquis of. See Stewart
 Louis XVI, Bernadotte a soldier and officer of, 5, 16
 Louis XVIII, his attitude towards Bernadotte, 306, 312, 318-322, 344, 345
 Louis Philippe, King, Bernadotte's relations with, 320, 345-348
 Louisiana, Bernadotte offered the Governorship of, its immense size and importance, reasons of Bernadotte's refusal, its purchase by the United States, 149-152
 Lowe, Sir Hudson, his impression of Bernadotte in 1812, 275
 Löwenhjelm, the brothers Charles and Gustave, Swedish statesmen, 359, 380
 Lübeck, 197-199
 Lucien Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon, a friend of Bernadotte's, 6, 88, 91, 103; his

- co-operation in the *coup d'état* of Brumaire, 116, 117; correspondence and relations with Bernadotte, 123, 127, 159, 160, 321
- Lyttelton, Sarah, Lady, 253, 254
- Macdonald, General, afterwards Marshal, and Duke of Tarentum, 181n, 222
- Madelin, Louis, author of *Life of Fouché*, 227, 228
- Madison, James, American statesman, 151
- Maestricht, siege of, 23
- Marbeuf, General, Governor of Corsica, patron of the Bonapartes, 6
- Marbot, Marcellin, author of *Mémoires*, 137, 138, 146, 191, 377
- Marceau, General, intimate friend of Bernadotte and his comrade-in-arms in the campaigns of 1794, 1795, and 1796, 20-23, 27, 34; his death, 35, 64
- Marie Antoinette, Queen, 23, 24, 71, 275
- Marmont, General, afterwards marshal, and Duke of Ragusa, a friend of Bernadotte's, 87, 167, 172, 311
- Marseilles, Bernadotte's adventures at, in the French Revolution, 10-14, 85, 86, 330
- Masséna, Marshal, afterwards Duke of Rivoli and Prince of Essling, rose from the ranks, 14n, 15n; differences with Bernadotte in Italy in 1797, 49, 63n; Napoleon's comment upon, 65; in Switzerland, 101; friend of Madame Récamier's, 136, 233; in opposition during the Consulate, 141; rallies to the Empire with Bernadotte, 154; other references to, 157, 181, 237, 247
- Maude, C. B., Colonel, military historian, 185n, 186n, 380
- Metternich, Prince, Austrian diplomat, Ambassador to France, his references to Bernadotte's Ambassadorship at Vienna, 75, 82; disagreed with Madame de Staël's opinion of Bernadotte, 134; conversation with Napoleon about Bernadotte, 246-247
- Minnesota, 150n
- Mirabeau, 10; intervenes in the *affaire d'Ambert*, 13; Hoche compared to him, 64
- Mireur, General, one of Bernadotte's A.D.C.'s, 72
- Missouri, 150n
- Mohrungen, battle of, 204
- Monk, General, 306
- Monroe, James, American statesman, concludes the Louisiana purchase in 1803, 151
- Montana, 150n
- Montluc, xi
- Morard d'Arces, Colonel, under whom Bernadotte served in the ranks, 7n; Bernadotte, as King of Sweden, confers a Swedish decoration upon him, 349
- Moreau, General, co-operates in the *coup d'état* of Brumaire, 109, 110; goes into opposition under the Consulate, 141, 144; is banished to America, 155; his return and death, 288-290; Bernadotte's generosity to his family, 290; contrasted with Bernadotte, 109, 155, 289
- Morning Chronicle*, the, 54
- Mortier, Marshal, 349
- Moscow, the fall of, 271; the retreat from, 272
- Moulins, General, one of the Directors of the French Republic, 96, 105
- Munich, Bernadotte's capture of, 174, 175
- Murat, Joachim, General, brother-in-law of Napoleon, afterwards Marshal, rose from the ranks, 14n, 30; assisted in the *coup d'état* of Brumaire, 112, 116; Bernadotte is best man at his wedding, 123; protests against Bernadotte being preferred to him for promotion, 128; becomes a marshal, 157; Grand Duke, 181; becomes King of Naples, 210; takes part with Bernadotte in "the Grand Pursuit," 192, 194, 197; in Poland, 201; Fouché looked upon him or Bernadotte as successor to Napoleon, 218, 227, 237, 293

Napoleon Bonaparte, described Bernadotte as "un vrai Gascon," xi; condemned the exclusive military system of the *ancien régime*, 8; Bernadotte sent to him with reinforcements, 42; he writes friendly letters welcoming Bernadotte to his army, 44; first meeting with Bernadotte and their first impressions, 44, 45; gives Bernadotte the command of his own vanguard in the Italian campaign, 1797, 45, 46; congratulates Bernadotte upon the crossing of the Tagliamento, 48; orders Bernadotte laconically to "take Gradisca," 47; reproves him for rashness but afterwards praises him, 48; appoints Bernadotte Governor of Friuli, 50, 51; co-operates in the *coup d'état* of the 18th Fructidor, 53; persuades Bernadotte to send an address from his army, 55; sends Bernadotte to Paris with captured flags, 55, 56; Bernadotte's letters to him, 61; his uneasiness at the report that Bernadotte is to be Minister of War, 62; invites Bernadotte to dinner at Passariano, 63; their remarkable conversations, 64-65; he sneers at Bernadotte's attachment to his corps, 67; his intrigues to have Bernadotte deprived of the command of the Army of Italy, and to have him sent to Vienna as Ambassador, 70; blames Bernadotte about the Viennese *émeute*, 82, 83; starts on his expedition to Egypt, 83; had been *fiancé* of Désirée Clary, 86; Bernadotte's marriage creates a strange situation, 88; his opinion of Bernadotte's War Ministry, 106; returns from Egypt, 108, 109; he contrasts Moreau and Bernadotte, 110; his interviews with Bernadotte before Brumaire, 110-114; his *coup d'état* of Brumaire, 114-117; in the evening he discusses Bernadotte's attitude, 116; after the *coup d'état* he becomes master of France, while Bernadotte is a fugitive in hiding,

117, 118; he becomes First Consul and swears "to be faithful to the Republic," 121, 122; amnesties and conciliates the defeated party, 122; appoints Bernadotte a Councillor of State, 122; absorbs Sieyès, 124; offers Bernadotte the post of "Lieutenant of the First Consul," 125; appoints him commander-in-chief of the Army of the West, 125; instructs him to "seize and shoot" Georges Cadoudal, 126; commits "the fate of the Republic" to his hands during the campaign of Marengo, 127; on his return learns that Bernadotte was one of those designated as his successor, 127; proposes to appoint him commander-in-chief of the Army of Reserve but yields to Murat's protests and cancels the appointment, 128; hints at having Bernadotte shot, 129; offers Bernadotte a command and an ambassadorship, 130; is annoyed to find Bernadotte's name cropping up in connection with the Ceracchi conspiracy, 141; compares Bernadotte to Marc Antony, 141; in 1802 he begins to unmask his autocratic designs, 142; his purging of the Tribunate leads to the so-called "Conspiracy of Paris," of which Bernadotte was the pivot, 143; his strides towards a dictatorship raise discontent in the higher ranks of the army, as exhibited in the Conspiracy of Donnadieu and the Plot of the Placards, 144-147; suspects Bernadotte of complicity in the latter plot and says that Bernadotte deserved to be shot, 148; he offers Bernadotte the Governorship of Louisiana but rejects his conditions, 149-151; appoints him Ambassador to the U.S.A., but by the sale of Louisiana deprives his mission of its importance, 152; annoyed at Bernadotte's resignation of the post, 152; he exiles General Moreau, 155; makes a treaty of alliance with Bernadotte, makes him marshal, and is

grateful to him for keeping his word, 156-158; appoints Bernadotte Governor of Hanover, 163; their relations smooth and satisfactory, 163; he humours Bernadotte by relieving the burdens of Hanover, 168, 169; he creates the Grand Army, declares war against Austria, gives Bernadotte the command of his left wing, 170; disapproves of Bernadotte's lenity to German territory, 170, 174; loiters at Linz on the march to Austerlitz and makes scapegoats of Murat and Bernadotte, 175; his dry tone on the morning of Austerlitz towards Bernadotte, 177; appoints Bernadotte Governor of Anspach and creates him Prince of Ponte Corvo, 180-182; in the campaign of 1806 gives Bernadotte the command of the first corps of the Grand Army, 193; by a mistake fights the Prussian rearguard at Jena, while Davout defeats the Prussian main army at Auerstadt, 186-187; falsely accuses Bernadotte of disobedience in order to cover up his own mistake, 187-191; praises Bernadotte for his pursuit of the Prussians and for the capture of Lübeck, 198, 200; he gives Bernadotte the command of the left wing in the campaign of Poland, 201; he praises Bernadotte's action at Mohrungen, 204-205; and is touched when he is wounded, 206; appoints him Governor of the Hanseatic Towns, commander-in-chief of the army of occupation in Denmark, and of half the troops in Germany, 207-214; he contemplates making Bernadotte King of Spain if his brothers fail him, and talks of adopting him as his own successor on the throne of France, 210; he disregards Bernadotte's repeated warnings about the inefficiency of the Saxon troops in the campaign of 1809, 216-218; mutual complaints and recriminations between him and Bernadotte at Wagram, 219,

220; his action in reference to Bernadotte's gasconading Order of the Day to his Saxon troops, 222; the Emperor appoints Bernadotte to command the Army of Antwerp to resist the Walcheren Expedition, 224; he places a spy on Bernadotte, 225; he blames Bernadotte for an Order of the Day at Antwerp, and for being the object of dynastic intrigues and recalls him, 226, 227; he orders Bernadotte to his principality and offers him the command of the French armies in Catalonia and on his refusal calls him to Vienna, 228; he appoints him Governor of Rome, 229; at first discourages Bernadotte's candidature for the Swedish succession, 236; seeks to put forward other French candidates, but when he finds that Bernadotte is the only Frenchman with any chance of success, supports him *sub rosa*, 237; proposes to bind Bernadotte never to bear arms against France, but ultimately agrees to Bernadotte's complete independence and freedom from vassalage, 245, 246; his comment upon Bernadotte's *début* in Sweden, 253; his tyrannical attitude towards Sweden, 259, 260; his relations with Bernadotte as Crown Prince, 262-264; his invasion of Swedish Pomerania, 265; subsequent negotiations with Bernadotte, 266; his invasion of Russia, 268-272; offers to forget the past, 280; orders Oudinot and Ney to seize Berlin; they are defeated by Bernadotte at Grossbeeren and Dennewitz, 261-264; is defeated at the battle of Leipsic, 301; his defeat attributed to Bernadotte, 302, 309, 337, 338; interview with General Skjöldebrand, 308; his escape from Elba, 319; the Hundred Days, 320; contrast between his destiny and Bernadotte's, 337; what they said of each other, 338-340; Bernadotte's premonition of his death,

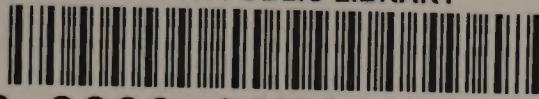
- 341; Bernadotte's tribute to his greatness, 342, 343
 Napoleon III, 237, 246, 332
 Natural boundaries, Bernadotte's preference for, 16, 17, 284, 305, 314
 Nebraska, 150n
 Ney, General, afterwards marshal, Duke of Elchingen, and Prince of the Moskowa, comrade-in-arms and intimate friend of Bernadotte's, serves under Bernadotte in Belgium, 20; in the Army of Sambre and Meuse, 27; at the siege of Philippsburg, 93, 94; in Poland, 202; is defeated by Bernadotte at Dennewitz, 292, 293; Bernadotte shocked at Ney's execution, 320; Bernadotte gives his son a commission in the Swedish army and makes him his A.D.C., 321; and receives him in Stockholm as envoy of Louis Philippe, 346
 North Dakota, 150n
 Norway, Bernadotte's curious reference to in 1806, 198; Bernadotte resolves to add it to Sweden, and obtains the concurrence of Russia and England, 257-259, 266, 270, 275, 276; his anxieties upon the subject, 277-282; the King of Denmark cedes Norway by the Treaty of Kiel, 304; England and Russia support Bernadotte, 308; union of Norway to Sweden, 313-315; he becomes King of Norway, 327, 328; how he established his dynasty in Norway, 366-371
 Novi, battle of (August 1799), 100
 Nuremberg, the University of, 37
 Oklahoma, 150n
 Oldenburg, Duke of, 234
 Orange, Prince of, 322
 Örebro, 241
 Orléans, Duc d'. See Louis Philippe
 Oscar, Prince, son of Bernadotte, afterwards King Oscar I, birth and boyhood, 88, 118, 134, 151; his portrait displayed and admired during the election to Swedish succession, 240, 243; he goes to Sweden and is proclaimed Duke of Sudermania, 262, 264, 269, 275; his coming of age, 317, 331, 334, 375
 Oudinot, General, Marshal, Duke of Reggio, 14n; rose from the ranks, 14n; at Wagram, 219, 222; defeated by Bernadotte at Grossbeeren in 1813, 291, 292
 Palmerston, Viscount, 351
 "Paris, the Conspiracy of," 144
 Passariano, 63-66
 Pau, 3-7, 38, 40, 163, 214, 248
 Pauline Bonaparte, Madame Leclerc, Princess Borghese, and Duchess of Guastalla, 6, 89, 91, 129, 135, 181, 211
 Philippsburg, siege of, 93
 Pichegru, General, 27, 53, 57
 "Plot of the Placards, the," 145-147
 Poland, Bernadotte commands the left wing of the Grand Army in the campaign of, 201-206
 Pomerania, Swedish, 265, 315
 Ponte Corvo, Bernadotte becomes Prince of, 181-184; refuses to visit his principality, 228; relinquishes it on becoming a Swede, 250
 Potgeisser family, the, at Coblenz, 40
 Pozzo di Borgo, Count and General, Bernadotte's relations with, 278-280, 297, 301
 Prussia, 169, 179, 185, 186, 199-200, 292-303, 305
 Quiberon, the English descent at, 126
 Rapp, General, a friend of Bernadotte's, 147, 148, 193
 Ratisbon, Bernadotte's famous retreat from, in 1796, 30-33
 Récamier, Madame, Bernadotte's romantic first meeting and friendship with, 135, 136; she becomes his confidante in 1803 and 1804, 154-156; she watches him at coronation of Napoleon, 164; Bernadotte's letters to her on the eve of Austerlitz, 176; when he is wounded, 206; on his election as Crown Prince of Sweden, 148; other references, 233, 331
 Rennes, 126, 145-148
 Rhine, the, 16, 17, 27-40, 92, 94, 101, 305, 306

- Richepanse, General, 130
 Robertson, Brother James, 209
 Robespierre, 21, 28
 Rocca, Madame de Staël's husband, 273
 Rocca, de, historian of the Walcheren campaign, 224
 Rochechouart, the Count de, mission from the Czar to Bernadotte in 1813, 296-300; description of Bernadotte at battle of Leipsic, 301
 Roëderer, Count, 210
 Roer, the battle of the, 23
 Romana, the Marquis de la, 207-209
 Rome, Bernadotte appointed Governor of, 229
 Rosebery, Earl of, his reference to the Bernadotte dynasty, 248
 Russia, 77, 201-205, 258, 260, 260-264, 265-272, 275, 280-283, 295, 296-302, 307, 308, 318, 322, 335, 351, 353; and see Alexander I

 St. Helena, the King of Sweden and the prisoner of, 337-343
 St. Just, Robespierre's pen and mouthpiece, his meetings with Bernadotte in 1794, 21; his execution, 28
 Sambre and Meuse, the Army of, origin of its name, 27n; Bernadotte serves as general in, 27-40; other references to, 46, 47, 158, 305
 "Sans-Gêne, Madame," Madame Lefèbvre, Duchess of Dantzic, 180; anecdote about her and Bernadotte, 311
 Santo Domingo, 129
 Sarrazin, General, Bernadotte's staff officer, 1794-1797, the author of *Memoirs*, 3, 4, 27, 30-33, 36-39, 63-67, 72, 114, 117, 118, 126, 156-158
 Saumarez, Admiral, 209
 Savary, General, Duke of Rovigo, chief of Napoleon's gendarmerie, 142; his comment on Bernadotte's connection with the Conspiracy of Paris, 143; his *Memoirs*, 191n, 339, 377
 Saxons, the, in the Wagram campaign, 216-223; in the War of Liberation, 292, 293, 294, 301
 Sayn-Wittgenstein, Prince of, 213
 Ségur, Count Philip de, author of *Mémoires*, 177, 178, 191, 377
 Sieyès, ex-abbé, one of the Directors of the French Republic, a pretentious pamphleteer, 28; Ambassador in Berlin, becomes a member of the French Directory with the intention of overthrowing it, 94-96; opposes Bernadotte's appointment as Minister of War, 97, 98; their relations, 99-102; procures his retirement, 103-105; co-operates in Napoleon's *coup d'état* of Brumaire, 109, 116; Napoleon gets rid of him, and he loses all his prestige and retires from public life, 124; mentioned, 310
 Simon, General, 137, 146
 Skjöldebrand, General, 243, 308
 Sloane, William M., American biographer of Napoleon, 186n, 380
 Sophie Albertine, Princess of Sweden, 316
 Soult, Marshal, Duke of Dalmatia, rose from the ranks, 14n; at Austerlitz, 176-178; takes part in the Great Pursuit, 192, 197, 200; Bernadotte, as King of Sweden, confers a decoration upon him, 349
 South Dakota, 150n
 Spain, Spanish Army in Denmark under Bernadotte, 207, 208; Joseph Bonaparte becomes King of, 208; Napoleon contemplated making Bernadotte King of, 210
 Staël, Madame de, a friend and admirer of Bernadotte's, meets Bernadotte in 1797, he frequents her salon, their political sympathy, 59, 60; refers to his "goodness of heart" towards Colonel d'Ambert, 85; encourages his opposition to Napoleon's ambition, 133, 134; involved in the Conspiracy of Paris and exiled from Paris, 141-144; visits Bernadotte in Sweden and stimulates him against Napoleon, 273-275
 Stewart, Sir Charles, Major-General, afterwards 3rd Marquis of Londonderry, liaison officer between the British Government

- and Bernadotte in the campaign of 1813, 285; a distinguished soldier, *ib.*; his relations with Bernadotte and his impressions of him, 285-288, 291, 293, 300-304
- Stralsund, in Swedish Pomerania, 281, 290
- Strelitz, a week-end party at, 290, 291
- Suremain, Count, aide-de-camp to King Charles XIII of Sweden, persuades the King to support Bernadotte's candidature for the Swedish succession, 242-244; contrasts Napoleon and Bernadotte, 255
- Sweden, Bernadotte's Swedish prisoners at Lübeck in 1806, 197, 198; his election as Crown Prince of Sweden, 233-249; his career as Crown Prince, 250-322; his career as King, 325-376; how he established his dynasty, 357-365
- Tagliamento, the crossing of, 46, 48, 56, 57
- Talleyrand, Prince of Benevento, 71-73, 82, 83, 123, 205, 310
- Teining, battle of, 22nd August, 1796, 30-33
- Terror, the Reign of, 17-21, 23, 24, 28
- Thiébault, General, author of *Mémoires*, 51
- Thiers, historian, and President of the French Republic, publicly exculpated Bernadotte from the accusation of treachery, 225, 349
- Thimme, Herr, Hanoverian Minister, pays a tribute to Bernadotte's nobility, generosity and humanity in the government of Hanover, 169
- Thornton, Sir Edward, British diplomat, 276, 282, 306
- "Tiles, the day of the," 10
- Tilsit, the conference at, 207, 268
- Times, The*, cited, 82, 374
- Titeux, Lieut.-Colonel, of the French general staff, author of article in *Revue Napoléonienne* exculpating Bernadotte from blame for his absence from Jena, 185-191, 379, 380
- Trobriand, Lieutenant, aide-de-camp to Marshal Davout, 189
- Truguet, Admiral, 132
- United States, Bernadotte appointed Ambassador to, 149-153
- Vandamme, General, friend of Bernadotte's, 101
- Vasas, the. See Gustavus IV and Gustavus, Prince
- Vendée, La, Bernadotte and, 126, 127
- Vienna, Bernadotte's Ambassadorship at, 70-83
- Villatte, Captain, aide-de-camp to Bernadotte, 72
- Villiers, M. de, at Lübeck, 188, 189
- Vogüé, Count E. M. de, French academician, reference to Bernadotte's Gascon raciality, xi; opinion that Pingaud's portrait of Bernadotte was "very severe," 378
- Wagram, the campaign of, 215-223
- Walcheren Expedition, the, 224-227
- Walewska, Madame, 205
- Warén, Bernadotte's adventure at, 196
- Wellington, Duke of, 282, 283
- Wetterstedt, Swedish statesman, 359
- Whitworth, Lord, British Ambassador at Paris, 154
- Wilson, Sir Robert, British commissary with the Austrian Army in the War of Liberation, 296, 302
- Wrede, General, Count, Swedish envoy in Paris in 1810, endorses and encourages Bernadotte's candidature for the Swedish succession in 1810, 235, 236; publishes a letter in support of him, 241, 242
- Wyoming, 150n
- Zerbst, 295
- Zurlinden, General, author of *Napoléon et ses Maréchaux*, describes Bernadotte's handsome appearance, 87; says that Bernadotte was "absolutely suited for an independent command," 167; says that, as an administrator, Bernadotte observed moderation, justice and skill, 201

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 08744 124 0

WILLIAM THE FIRST

By Paul Wiegler

FROM the deathbed of Frederick the Great to the accession of Frederick William IV, this biography covers a century of German history. The central figure is, of course, Bismarck's master, the king whose life was filled with the most powerful contrasts, violent shocks, and historic events of far-reaching importance. Paul Wiegler does not content himself with studying the political elements; he gives proper importance to the human traits of his subject. He has been able to do justice to knightly, aristocratic William the First. All the great figures of the century are here. Whatever period one takes — the revolution, the Franco-Prussian war, the tragedy of the Crown Prince — it is admirably handled.

Although 'William the First' involved a stupendous amount of preparation, it is always readable. This work will not soon be superseded, for Paul Wiegler has epitomized the most notable events of a long and important period, and the figure he draws of the King is masterly and certain to endure.

Illustrated

NEW BIOGRAPHY

THE LETTERS AND
FRIENDSHIPS OF SIR
CECIL SPRING RICE: A
Record

Edited by Stephen Gwynn

GEORGE HARVEY

By Willis Fletcher Johnson

ETHAN ALLEN

By John Pell

EDWARD COKE

By Hastings Lyon and Herman Block

THE STORMY LIFE OF
MIRABEAU

By Henry de Jouvenel

WILLIAM THE FIRST

By Paul Wiegler

THE AMAZING CAREER
OF BERNADOTTE

By Sir Dunbar Plunket Barton

THE LIFE OF JOHN
MARSHALL

By Albert J. Beveridge
Popular Edition

THE LIFE AND LETTERS
OF JOHN HAY

By William Roscoe Thayer
Popular Edition

PARK STREET LIBRARY
OF DIARIES, MEMOIRS,
AND LETTERS

'Monk' Lewis's Journal of a
West Indian Proprietor

Memoirs of Lorenzo da Ponte

Ernest Renan's Recollections of
My Youth

THE SON OF APOLLO

By Frederick J. E. Woodbridge

THE LIFE OF AN ORDI-
NARY WOMAN

By Anne Ellis

A FRONTIER DOCTOR

By Henry F. Hoyt

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF
CHARLES FOLLEN Mc-
KIM

By Charles Moore

THE MAN CHARLES DICK-
ENS: A Victorian Portrait

By Edward Wagenknecht

TU FU: The Autobiography
of a Chinese Poet

By Florence Ayscough

THE HARLEY STREET
CALENDAR

By H. H. Bashford

LETTERS OF WOMEN IN
LOVE

Edited by R. L. Megroz

THE LETTERS OF VIN-
CENT VAN GOGH. Vol-
ume III

JOHN KEATS

By Amy Lowell
Popular Edition

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
